

Au Lecteur (To the Reader)
Charles Baudelaire // trans. James McGowan.

Folly and error, stinginess and sin
Possess our spirits and fatigue our flesh.
And like a pet we feed our tame remorse
As beggars take to nourishing their lice.

Our sins are stubborn, our contrition lax;
We offer lavishly our vows of faith
And turn back gladly to the path of filth,
Thinking mean tears will wash away our stains.

On evil's pillow lies the alchemist
Satan Thrice-Great, who lulls our captive soul,
And all the richest metal of our will
Is vaporized by his hermetic arts.

Truly the Devil pulls on all our strings!
In most repugnant objects we find charms;
Each day we're one step further into Hell,
Content to move across the stinking pit.

As a poor libertine will suck and kiss
The sad, tormented tit of some old whore,
We steal a furtive pleasure as we pass,
A shrivelled orange that we squeeze and press.

Close, swarming, like a million writhing worms,
A demon nation riots in our brains,
And, when we breathe, death flows into our lungs,
A secret stream of dull, lamenting cries.

If slaughter, or if arson, poison, rape
Have not as yet adorned our fine designs,
The banal canvas of our woeful fates,
It's only that our spirit lacks the nerve.

But there with all the jackals, panthers, hounds
The monkeys, scorpions, the vultures, snakes,
Those howling, yelping, grunting, crawling brutes,
The infamous menagerie of vice.

One creature only is most foul and false!
Though making no grand gestures, nor great cries,
He willingly would devastate the earth
And in one yawning swallow all the world;

He is Ennui!*--with tear-filled eye he dreams
Of scaffolds, as he puffs his water-pipe.
Reader, you know this dainty monster too;
--Hypocrite reader,--fellowman,--my tw

“With this poem and the collection that follows (The Flowers of Evil), Baudelaire grasped the relationship between aesthetic experience and the secret longings of those who pursue it. He also discovered one of the great terrors of modern life, ennui, and understood the insane lengths we'll go to in order to escape it. Later in the collection, the image of ‘an oasis of horror in a desert of ennui’ gets at the relationship between boredom and a sort of aesthetic excess that is latent in the fallen, material world he explored. As J.K. Huysmans wrote, Baudelaire mapped the ‘breeding-ground’ of the nineteenth century’s ‘intellectual aberrations.’ In the process he redefined modern literature.”

(Andrew McCann, English Department)

Venus and Adonis William Shakespeare.

VWith this she ceazeth on his sweating palme,
The president of pith, and liuelyhood,
And trembling in her passion, calls it balme,
Earths soueraigne salue, to do a goddesse good,
Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force,
Couragiously to plucke him from his horse.
Ouer one arme the lustie coursers raine,
Vnder her other was the tender boy,
VWho blusht, and powted in a dull disdaine,
VWith leaden appetite, vnapt to toy,
She red, and hot, as coles of glovving fier,
He red for shame, but frostie in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough,
Nimbly she fastens, (ô how quicke is loue!)
The steed is stalled vp, and euen now,
To tie the rider she begins to proue:
Backward she pusht him, as she would be thrust,
And gouernd him in strength though not in lust.

So soone was she along, as he was downe,
Each leaning on their elbowes and their hips:
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And gins to chide, but soone she stops his lips,
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall neuer open.

He burnes with bashfull shame, she with her teares
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheekes,
Then with her windie sighes, and golden heares,
To fan, and blow them drie againe she seekes.
He saith, she is immodest, blames her misse,
VWhat followes more, she murthers with a kiss.

Euen as an emptie Eagle sharpe by fast,
Tires with her beake on feathers, flesh, and bone,
Shaking her wings, deuouring all in hast,
Till either gorge be stufft, or pray be gone:
Euen so she kist his brow, his cheeke, his chin,
And where she ends, she doth anew begin.
(Lines 25-60)

“Currently, I am fascinated with Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis. By ‘flipping’ the gender on the traditional rhetoric of seduction, William Shakespeare prompts us to think again (and again, and again) about the cluster of myths that underwrite stories of seduction and rape. The male fantasy of being aggressively pursued by a goddess begins to look like the flip side of the misogynist assumption that women secretly want to be forced.”

(Thomas Luxon, English Department)

Wild Nights Emily Dickinson.

Wild nights - Wild nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile - the winds -
To a Heart in port -
Done with the Compass -
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -
Ah - the Sea!
Might I but moor - tonight -
In thee!

"I am not sure where I first came across this poem, but I was asked by my PhD examining committee to recite it at my orals exam. It seems to me to encapsulate very powerful and contradictory emotions with astounding economy: the tumultuous and stormy passion of love, the incomparable intimacy of being snug together and safe "in port," and the poignant yearning from not having either (notice the conditional tense). It is also delightfully gender queer."
(Ivy Schweitzer, English Department)

Buffalo Dusk
Carl Sandburg.

The buffaloes are gone.
And those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
Those who saw the buffaloes by thousands and how they pawed the prairie sod into dust
with their hoofs, their great heads down pawing on in a great pageant of dusk,
Those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
And the buffaloes are gone.

“I’ve always loved the rhythm of this poem.”
(Robbie Herbst ’16)

**Dear March--come in--
Emily Dickinson.**

Dear March - Come in -
How glad I am -
I hoped for you before -
Put down your Hat -
You must have walked -
How out of Breath you are -
Dear March, how are you, and the Rest -
Did you leave Nature well -
Oh March, Come right upstairs with me -
I have so much to tell -

I got your Letter, and the Birds -
The Maples never knew that you were coming -
I declare - how Red their Faces grew -
But March, forgive me -
And all those Hills you left for me to Hue -
There was no Purple suitable -
You took it all with you -

Who knocks? That April -
Lock the Door -
I will not be pursued -
He stayed away a Year to call
When I am occupied -
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come

That blame is just as dear as Praise
And Praise as mere as Blame -

“This is one of my favorite poems about the return--and possibility--of spring in New England. I think of it every year on the 1st of March, and always take time out of my day to reread it.”

(Barbara Will, *English Department*)

Fooling God **Louise Erdrich.**

I must become small and hide where he cannot reach.
I must become dull and heavy as an iron pot.
I must be tireless as rust and bold as roots
growing through the locks on doors
and crumbling the conderblocks
of the foundations of his everlasting throne.
I must be strange as pity so he'll believe me.
I must be terrible and brush my hair
so that he finds me attractive.
Perhaps if I invoke Clare, the patron saint of television.
Perhaps if I become the images
passing through the cells of a woman's brain.

I must become very large and block his sight.
I must be sharp and impetuous as knives.
I must insert myself into the bark of his apple trees,
and cleave the bones of his cows. I must be the marrow
that he drinks into his cloud-wet body.
I must be careful and laugh when he laughs.
I must turn down the covers and guide him in.
I must fashion his children out of playdough, blue, pink, green.
I must pull them from between my legs
and set them before the television.

I must hide my memory in a mustard grain
so that he'll search for it over time until time is gone.
I must lose myself in the world's regard and disparagement.
I must remain this person and be no trouble.
None at all. So he'll forget.
I'll collect dust out of reach,
a single dish from a set, a flower made of felt,
a tablet the wrong shape to choke on.

I must become essential and file everything
under my own system,
so we can lose him and his proofs and adherents.
I must be a doubter in a city of belief
that hails his signs (the great footprints
long as limousines, the rough print on the wall).
On the pavement where his house begins
fainting women kneel. I'm not among them
although they polish the brass tongues of his lions
with their own tongues
and taste the everlasting life.

"This may seem like an odd 'favorite.' However, my perspective is that of a Tuscarora woman whose tribal community was long targeted (like so many were) by Christian missionary efforts to wipe out our spiritual values, identities, and traditions--our "heathen" ways. Erdrich's poem speaks with irony and play to the resistance, rich creativity, and the pluck of indigenous cultural affirmation, even when faced with the threat of erasure."

(Vera Palmer, *Native American Studies*)

WILLKOMMEN UND ABSCHIED

Es schlug mein Herz, geschwind zu Pferde!
 Es war getan fast eh gedacht.
 Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,
 Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht;
 Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche,
 Ein aufgetürmter Riese, da,
 Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche
 Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel
 Sah kläglich aus dem Duft hervor,
 Die Winde schwingen leise Flügel,
 Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr;
 Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer,
 Doch frisch und fröhlich war mein Mut:
 In meinen Adern welches Feuer!
 In meinem Herzen welche Glut!

Dich sah ich, und die milde Freude
 Floß von dem süßen Blick auf mich;
 Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite
 Und jeder Atemzug für dich.
 Ein rosenfarbnes Frühlingswetter
 Umgab das liebliche Gesicht,
 Und Zärtlichkeit für mich – ihr Götter!
 Ich hofft es, ich verdient es nicht!

Doch ach, schon mit der Morgensonne
 Verengt der Abschied mir das Herz:
 In deinen Küssen welche Wonne!
 In deinem Auge welcher Schmerz!
 Ich ging, du standst und sahst zur Erden,
 Und sahst mir nach mit nassem Blick:
 Und doch, welch Glück, geliebt zu werden!
 Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück!

WELCOME AND PARTING

A heartbeat, and my horse was ready!
 Scarcely a thought, and it was done.
 Earth lay in evening's arms already,
 Night veiled the hills as I rode on;
 The mist-clad oak already towered
 Above me like a giant, where
 From the deep thicket's gloom they glowered,
 The hundred eyes of night's dark stare.

Through clouds to misty cloud-banks drifting
 The sad moon showed its sleepy head;
 The winds rushed by, their soft wings lifting,
 Fanning my ears with sighs of dread;
 A thousand monsters night was spawning
 And yet my spirits still were bold:
 What ardour in my veins was burning,
 What fire leapt up a thousandfold!

I saw you, felt your soul's outpouring
 In the sweet kindness of your gaze;
 My heart was yours and all adoring,
 Each pulse for you, each breath your praise.
 A rose-red glow of spring surrounded
 Your dear face; in it I could see
 Oh God, how undeserved, unbounded
 That hope! your tender love for me.

But oh, we part, for day is breaking!
 The rapture of your kiss must end
 Already; how my heart is aching,
 Seeing what grief your eyes portend!
 Downcast, tears welling in distress,
 You stood, I stood, you watched me go
 And yet, oh God, what happiness
 In being loved, in loving so!

“Why this one? It was one of my first encounters with Goethe (in middle school, I think), and I was swept away by the immediacy, the rhythm, the pace, and the drama of this poem. The notion of love is clichéd, for sure—but the intricate relationship between narrating and experiencing it, between movement and stasis, more than compensates for it.”

(Petra McGillen, German Studies Department)

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening Robert Frost.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

"Growing up in New England, and attending Middlebury College, Robert Frost was an omnipresent poetic force. My favorite is "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening". Different parts of the poem have been meaningful to me at different stages of my life.

I've made a habit of walking at night in snow storms ever since high school. I love all things weather related...especially snow, but there's something magical about how the whole world seems to stop during a good snow storm at night. You can stroll down the middle of a road, making fresh tracks, without any other signs of normal daily life. "The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake" - encapsulates that sensation perfectly for me.

For the last 15 years, this poem has made me think of my wife, who's an avid horse rider. I never spent time around horses until I met her, and now the personality of Frost's horse really comes through the poem to me. "He gives his harness bells and shake to ask if there is some mistake" always makes me smile now, as I imagine my wife having that connection with her horse.

In short, it's a nice easy poem that always gives me a little shot of happiness."
(Erich Osterberg, Earth Sciences)

Jack Would Speak Through the Imperfect Medium of Alice Alice Notley.

So I'm an alcoholic Catholic mother-lover
yet there is no sweetish nectar no fuzzed-peach
thing no song sing but in the word
which I'm starlessly unreachably faithful
you, pedant & you, politically righteous & you, alive
you think you can peel my sober word apart from my drunken word
my Buddhist word apart from my white sugar Thérèse word my
word to comrade from my word to my mother
but all my words are one word my lives one
my last to first wound round in finally fiberless crystalline skein

I began as a drunkard & ended as a child
I began as an ordinary cruel lover & ended as a boy who
 read radiant newsprint
I began physically embarrassing—"bloated"—&
 ended as a perfect black-haired laddy
I began unnaturally subservient to my mother &
 ended in the crib of her goldenness
I began in a fatal hemorrhage & ended in a
 tiny love's body perfect smallest one

But I began in a word & I ended in a word &
 I know that word better
Than any knows me or knows that word,
 probably, but I only asked to know it—
That word is the word when I say me bloated
 & when I say me manly it's
The word that word I write perfectly lovingly
 one & one after the other one

But you—you can only take it when it's that one & not
 some other one
Or you say "he lost it" as if I (I so nothinged) could ever
 lose the word
But when there's only one word—when
 you know them, the words—
The words are all only one word the perfect
 word—
My body my alcohol my pain my death are only
 the perfect word as I
Tell it to you, poor sweet categorizers
 Listen
Every me I was & wrote
 were only & all (gently)
That one perfect word

I first encountered it about the time that my enthusiasm for Jack Kerouac's writing had become complicated by my sadness at his attitudes, particularly in relation to gender and class. The poem reminded me that the joys in reading Kerouac, like those in reading Gertrude Stein or Willa Cather, came from someplace more genuine than shared opinion or belief.

(Gary Lenhart, *English*)

Compass
Jorge Luis Borges, Trans. from Spanish by Richard Wilbur.

All things are words of some strange tongue, in thrall
To Someone, Something, who both day and night
Proceeds in endless gibberish to write
The history of the world. In that dark scrawl
Rome is set down, and Carthage, I, you, all
And this my being which escapes me quite,
My anguished life that's cryptic, recondite,
And garbled as the tongues of Babel's fall.
Beyond the name there lies what has no name;
Today I have felt its shadow stir the aim
Of this blue needle, light and keen, whose sweep
Homes to the utmost of the sea its love,
Suggestive of a watch in dreams, or of
Some bird, perhaps, who shifts a bit in sleep.

“for me, such an esoteric yet eloquent tribute to the futility and the grandeur of human life and history”

(Min Kyung Jeon, '16)

The Robots. Robert Pinsky

When they choose to take material form they will resemble
Dragonflies, not machines. Their wings will shimmer.

Like the chorus of Greek drama they will speak
As many, but in the first person singular.

Their colors in the sky will canopy the surface of the earth.
In varying unison and diapason they will dance the forgotten.

Their judgment in its pure accuracy will resemble grace and in
Their circuits the one form of action will be understanding.

Their exquisite sensors will comprehend our very dust
And re-create the best and the worst of us, as though in art."

"I was inspired by Robert Pinsky's recent visit to campus and his reading of his poem
'The Robots'"
(Cece Shao '16)

The Laughing Heart **Charles Bukowski.**

your life is your life
don't let it be clubbed into dank submission.
be on the watch.
there are ways out.
there is light somewhere.
it may not be much light but
it beats the darkness.
be on the watch.
the gods will offer you chances.
know them.
take them.
you can't beat death but
you can beat death in life, sometimes.
and the more often you learn to do it,
the more light there will be.
your life is your life.
know it while you have it.
you are marvelous
the gods wait to delight
in you.

“this poem’s sparse, unassuming language makes its message all the more life-affirming and affecting”
(Min Kyung Jeon, '16)

**Excerpts from “Litany in Which Certain Things are Crossed Out”
Richard Silken.**

Every morning the maple leaves.

Every morning another chapter where the hero shifts
from one foot to the other. Every morning the same big
and little words all spelling out desire, all spelling out
You will be alone always and then you will die.

So maybe I wanted to give you something more than a catalog
of non-definitive acts,
something other than the desperation.

Dear So-and-So, I’m sorry I couldn’t come to your party.
Dear So-and-So, I’m sorry I came to your party
and seduced you
and left you bruised and ruined, you poor sad thing.

You want a better story. Who wouldn’t?
A forest, then. Beautiful trees. And a lady singing.

Love on the water, love underwater, love, love and so on.

[...]

Actually, you said *Love, for you,*
is larger than the usual romantic love. It’s like a religion. It’s
terrifying. No one
will ever want to sleep with you.

Okay, if you’re so great, you do it—
here’s the pencil, make it work . . .

If the window is on your right, you are in your own bed. If the window
is over your heart, and it is painted shut, then we are breathing
river water.

Build me a city and call it Jerusalem. Build me another and call it
Jerusalem.

We have come back from Jerusalem where we found not
what we sought, so do it over, give me another version,
a different room, another hallway, the kitchen painted over
and over,
another bowl of soup.

The entire history of human desire takes about seventy minutes to tell.
Unfortunately, we don’t have that kind of time.

Forget the dragon,
leave the gun on the table, this has nothing to do with happiness.

Let’s jump ahead to the moment of epiphany,
in gold light, as the camera pans to where
the action is,
lakeside and backlit, and it all falls into frame, close enough to see
the blue rings of my eyes as I say
something ugly.

(Min Kyung Jeon ’16)

YESEES AND NOEES (*Every Thing On It*)
Shel Silverstein.

The Yesees said yes to anything
That anyone suggested.
The Noees said no to everything
Unless it was proven and tested.
So the Yesees all died of much too much
And the Noees all died of fright,
But somehow I think the Thinkforyourselves
All came out all right.

“A life of moderation is important, but a life of total restriction is hardly a life at all.”
(Tony Anzivino '16)

It sifts from Leaden Sieves - (291)
Emily Dickinson.

It sifts from Leaden Sieves -
It powders all the Wood.
It fills with Alabaster Wool
The Wrinkles of the Road -

It makes an even Face
Of Mountain, and of Plain -
Unbroken Forehead from the East
Unto the East again -

It reaches to the Fence -
It wraps it Rail by Rail
Till it is lost in Fleeces -
It deals Celestial Vail

To Stump, and Stack - and Stem -
A Summer's empty Room -
Acres of Joints, where Harvests were,
Recordless, but for them -

It Ruffles Wrists of Posts
As Ankles of a Queen -
Then stills it's Artisans - like Ghosts -
Denying they have been -

This poem was my "death of an author" moment, several years before I became familiar with Barthes' essay. When I read the poem for my AP Lit class in high school, I presented a close reading arguing that "it" was sunlight. In response to a classmate who chimed in with the conventional reading (that "it" was snow), my teacher simultaneously defended my reading and forcefully reminded all of us that literary interpretations are neither definitive nor absolute. I've never forgotten it.

(Christie Harner, English Department)

Thanks
W.S. Merwin.

Listen
with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you
we are standing by the water thanking it
standing by the windows looking out
in our directions

back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging
after funerals we are saying thank you
after the news of the dead
whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you

over telephones we are saying thank you
in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators
remembering wars and the police at the door
and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you
in the banks we are saying thank you
in the faces of the officials and the rich
and of all who will never change
we go on saying thank you thank you

with the animals dying around us
taking our feelings we are saying thank you
with the forests falling faster than the minutes
of our lives we are saying thank you
with the words going out like cells of a brain
with the cities growing over us
we are saying thank you faster and faster
with nobody listening we are saying thank you
thank you we are saying and waving
dark though it is

(Anonymous '16)

Breaths Birago Diop.

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees,
It is our forefathers breathing.
The dead are not gone forever.
They are in the paling shadows,
And in the darkening shadows.
The dead are not beneath the ground,
They are in the rustling tree,
In the murmuring wood,
In the flowing water,
In the still water,
In the lonely place, in the crowd:
The dead are not dead.
Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees.
It is the breathing of our forefathers,
Who are not gone, not beneath the ground,
Not dead.
The dead are not gone for ever.
They are in a woman's breast,
A child's crying, a glowing ember.
The dead are not beneath the earth,
They are in the flickering fire,
In the weeping plant, the groaning rock,
The wooded place, the home.
The dead are not dead.
Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees.
It is the breathing of our forefathers.

“This is a poem by Birago Diop from Senegal. The poem was originally written in French and translated into English. Its English title is "Breaths." This poem means a lot to me because I studied it in 5th grade, just when I lost my beloved grandfather. The poem helped me cope.”
(Professor Coly, *Comparative Literature and African and African American Studies*)

Martin Schwarzschild, 1958.

If simple perfect laws rule the universe
should not pure thought be capable of uncovering
these perfect laws without having to lean on the
crutches of tediously assembled observations?

True, the laws to be discovered may be perfect,
but the human brain is not.
Left on its own, it is prone to stray,
as many past examples sadly prove

In fact, we have missed few chances to err
until new data freshly gleaned from nature
set us right again for the next steps
Thus, pillars rather than crutches are the
observations on which we base our theories

“One of my favorite poems was written by a scientist (naturally).
I included it in the front piece of my PhD thesis because I thought it captured
the basic problem of humans finding their way to understanding the universe
around us. Interestingly, it was written by a theorist but someone who
knew the real limitations of thought and theory without input from the
natural world.”

(Professor Fesen, *Physics and Astronomy*)

The Summer Day **Mary Oliver.**

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean-
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

"I like it because it ends with a very important question."

(Professor Tse, *Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences*)

I rörelse Karin Boye.

Den mätta dagen, den är aldrig störst.
Den bästa dagen är en dag av törst.

Nog finns det mål och mening i vår färd -
men det är vägen, som är mödan värd.

Det bästa målet är en nattlång rast,
där elden tänds och brödet bryts i hast.

På ställen, där man sover blott en gång,
blir sömnen trygg och drömmen full av sång.

Bryt upp, bryt upp! Den nya dagen gryr.
Oändligt är vårt stora äventyr.

On The Move Translated from Swedish by Jenny Nunn

The satiated day is never the greatest.
The best day is a day of thirst.

There is probably purpose and meaning in our journey
but it is the pathway there, which is worth our while.

The greatest aim is a night long rest,
where the fire is lit and the bread broken in haste.

In the place, where you sleep but once,
sleep becomes safe and the dream full of song.

Move on, move on! The new day is dawning.
Endless is our great adventure.

(Fredrik Eriksson '16)

**MOUNTAIN DEW COMMERCIAL DISGUISED AS A LOVE
POEM
Matthew Olzmann.**

Here's what I've got, the reasons why our marriage
might work: Because you wear pink but write poems
about bullets and gravestones. Because you yell
at your keys when you lose them, and laugh,
loudly, at your own jokes. Because you can hold a pistol,
gut a pig. Because you memorize songs, even commercials
from thirty years back and sing them when vacuuming.
You have soft hands. Because when we moved, the contents
of what you packed were written *inside* the boxes.
Because you think swans are overrated.
Because you drove me to the train station. You drove me
to Minneapolis. You drove me to Providence.
Because you underline everything you read, and circle
the things you think are important, and put stars next
to the things you think I should think are important,
and write notes in the margins about all the people
you're mad at and my name almost never appears there.
Because you make that pork recipe you found
in the Frida Kahlo Cookbook. Because when you read
that essay about Rilke, you underlined the whole thing
except the part where Rilke says love means to deny the self
and to be consumed in flames. Because when the lights
are off, the curtains drawn, and an additional sheet is nailed
over the windows, you still believe someone outside
can see you. And one day five summers ago,
when you couldn't put gas in your car, when your fridge
was so empty—not even leftovers or condiments—
there was a single twenty-ounce bottle of Mountain Dew,
which you paid for with your last damn dime
because you once overheard me say that I liked it.

(Grant Schutzman '16)

Thank You Led Zeppelin.

If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you.
When mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me.

Kind woman, I give you my all, Kind woman, nothing more.

Little drops of rain whisper of the pain, tears of loves lost in the days gone by.
My love is strong, with you there is no wrong,
together we shall go until we die. My, my, my.
An inspiration is what you are to me, inspiration, look... see.

And so today, my world it smiles, your hand in mine, we walk the miles,
Thanks to you it will be done, for you to me are the only one.
Happiness, no more be sad, happiness....I'm glad.
If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you.
When mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me.

I rarely read poetry, but I do often listen to music which really is poetry set to music in my opinion.

So that being said, I will choose "Thank you" by Led Zeppelin. This was the first song from the band whose lyrics were written exclusively by Robert Plant. It had little resonance to me until I met my wife Avery. We played this as the first song on the day of our marriage and I often listen to it and think of the many miles we have walked together from the time that we first met. In my life events, finding an empowering partner has been the greatest gift.

(Professor Hoppa, Department of Biology)

**Here
Kim Addonizio.**

After it ended badly it got so much better
which took a while of course but still
he grew so tender & I so grateful
which maybe tells you something about how it was
I'm trying to tell you I know you
have staggered wept spiraled through a long room
banging your head against it holding crushed
bird skulls in your hands your many hearts unstrung
unable to play a note their wood still beautiful
& carved so elaborately maybe a collector would want them
stupid collectors always preserving & never breaking open
the jars so everyone starves while admiring the view
you don't own anyone everything will be taken from you
go ahead & eat this poem please it will help

(Grant Schutman '16)

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep
Mary Fyre.

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

(Angel Saavedra '16)

I Know a Man
Robert Creeley

As I sd to my
friend, because I am
always talking,—John, I

sd, which was not his
name, the darkness sur-
rounds us, what

can we do against
it, or else, shall we &
why not, buy a goddamn big car,

drive, he sd, for
christ's sake, look
out where yr going.

(Matt Rabito '18)

We Were Emergencies Buddy Wakefield.

We can stick anything into the fog and make it look like a ghost.
But tonight let us not become tragedies.
We are not funeral homes
with propane tanks in our windows
lookin' like cemeteries.
Cemeteries are just the Earth's way of not letting go.
Let go.
Tonight, poets, turn your ridiculous wrists so far backwards
the razor blades in your pencil tips
can't get a good angle on all that beauty inside.
Step into this
with your airplane parts
move forward
and repeat after me with your heart:
I no longer need you to fuck me as hard as I hated myself.
Make love to me
like you know I am better than the worst thing I ever did.
Go slow.
I'm new to this,
but I *have* seen nearly every city from a rooftop
without jumping.
I *have* realized that the moon
did not have to be full for us to love it,
that we are not tragedies
stranded here beneath it,
that if my heart
really broke
every time I fell from love
I'd be able to offer you confetti by now.
But hearts don't break, y'all,
they bruise and get better.
We were never tragedies.
We were emergencies.
You call 9 - 1 - 1.
Tell them I'm havin' a fantastic time.

"It's a poem I first listened to my sophomore year, and I think that I've only grown to love it even more as time has worn on. Everything's a work in progress, and I'm still learning to let go, fall in and out of love (with people, with places, with things), and to get back up again. Life's hectic and crazy and painful and full, and that's okay."

(Esther Wu, '16)

By Victor Hugo

Tomorrow, at dawn, in the hour when the countryside becomes white,
I will leave. You see, I know that you are waiting for me.
I will go by the forest, I will go by the mountain.
I cannot stay far from you any longer.
I will walk the eyes fixed on my thoughts,
Without seeing anything outside, nor hearing any noise,
Alone, unknown, the back curved, the hands crossed,
Sad, and the day for me will be like the night.
I will not look at the gold of the evening which falls,
Nor the faraway sails descending towards Harfleur.
And when I arrive, I will put on your tomb
A green bouquet of holly and flowering heather.

“It turns out that Hugo wrote this after his daughter drowned in the Seine. The sudden twist at the end really left an impression on me because until then it seemed like a typical love song or story. The theme of loving someone in the past while still living in the present is also something I appreciate about this particular poem.”

(Anonymous, ‘17)

**Poem [Lana Turner has Collapsed!]
Frank O'Hara.**

Lana Turner has collapsed!
I was trotting along and suddenly
it started raining and snowing
and you said it was hailing
but hailing hits you on the head
hard so it was really snowing and
raining and I was in such a hurry
to meet you but the traffic
was acting exactly like the sky
and suddenly I see a headline
LANA TURNER HAS COLLAPSED!
there is no snow in Hollywood
there is no rain in California
I have been to lots of parties
and acted perfectly disgraceful
but I never actually collapsed
oh Lana Turner we love you get up

(Matt Rabito '18)

Tulips Sylvia Plath.

The tulips are too excitable, it is winter here.
Look how white everything is, how quiet, how snowed-
in.

I am learning peacefulness, lying by myself quietly
As the light lies on these white walls, this bed, these
hands.

I am nobody; I have nothing to do with explosions.
I have given my name and my day-clothes up to the
nurses
And my history to the anesthetist and my body to
surgeons.

They have propped my head between the pillow and
the sheet-cuff
Like an eye between two white lids that will not shut.
Stupid pupil, it has to take everything in.
The nurses pass and pass, they are no trouble,
They pass the way gulls pass inland in their white caps,
Doing things with their hands, one just the same as
another,
So it is impossible to tell how many there are.

My body is a pebble to them, they tend it as water
Tends to the pebbles it must run over, smoothing them
gently.

They bring me numbness in their bright needles, they
bring me sleep.
Now I have lost myself I am sick of baggage—
My patent leather overnight case like a black pillbox,
My husband and child smiling out of the family
photo;
Their smiles catch onto my skin, little smiling hooks.

I have let things slip, a thirty-year-old cargo boat
stubbornly hanging on to my name and address.
They have swabbed me clear of my loving
associations.

Scared and bare on the green plastic-pillowed trolley
I watched my teaset, my bureaus of linen, my books
Sink out of sight, and the water went over my head.
I am a nun now, I have never been so pure.

I didn't want any flowers, I only wanted
To lie with my hands turned up and be utterly empty.
How free it is, you have no idea how free—

The peacefulness is so big it dazes you,
And it asks nothing, a name tag, a few trinkets.
It is what the dead close on, finally; I imagine them
Shutting their mouths on it, like a Communion tablet.

The tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me.
Even through the gift paper I could hear them
breathe
Lightly, through their white swaddlings, like an awful
baby.

Their redness talks to my wound, it corresponds.
They are subtle : they seem to float, though they weigh
me down,
Upsetting me with their sudden tongues and their
color,
A dozen red lead sinkers round my neck.

Nobody watched me before, now I am watched.
The tulips turn to me, and the window behind me
Where once a day the light slowly widens and slowly
thins,
And I see myself, flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow
Between the eye of the sun and the eyes of the tulips,
And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself.
The vivid tulips eat my oxygen.

Before they came the air was calm enough,
Coming and going, breath by breath, without any
fuss.
Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise.
Now the air snags and eddies round them the way a
river
Snags and eddies round a sunken rust-red engine.
They concentrate my attention, that was happy
Playing and resting without committing itself.

The walls, also, seem to be warming themselves.
The tulips should be behind bars like dangerous
animals;
They are opening like the mouth of some great African
cat,
And I am aware of my heart: it opens and closes
Its bowl of red blooms out of sheer love of me.
The water I taste is warm and salt, like the sea,
And comes from a country far away as health.

“Freshman year of high school. First poem that made me appreciate poetry. First poem that made me realize that emotions can suffocate as much as they can breathe life.”

(Soyeun Yang '16)

Having A Coke With You Frank O'Hara

is even more fun than going to San Sebastian, Irún, Hendaye, Biarritz, Bayonne
or being sick to my stomach on the Travesera de Gracia in Barcelona
partly because in your orange shirt you look like a better happier St. Sebastian
partly because of my love for you, partly because of your love for yoghurt
partly because of the fluorescent orange tulips around the birches
partly because of the secrecy our smiles take on before people and statuary
it is hard to believe when I'm with you that there can be anything as still
as solemn as unpleasantly definitive as statuary when right in front of it
in the warm New York 4 o'clock light we are drifting back and forth
between each other like a tree breathing through its spectacles
and the portrait show seems to have no faces in it at all, just paint
you suddenly wonder why in the world anyone ever did them

I look

at you and I would rather look at you than all the portraits in the world
except possibly for the *Polish Rider* occasionally and anyway it's in the Frick
which thank heavens you haven't gone to yet so we can go together the first time
and the fact that you move so beautifully more or less takes care of Futurism
just as at home I never think of the *Nude Descending a Staircase* or
at a rehearsal a single drawing of Leonardo or Michelangelo that used to wow me
and what good does all the research of the Impressionists do them
when they never got the right person to stand near the tree when the sun sank
or for that matter Marino Marini when he didn't pick the rider as carefully
as the horse

it seems they were all cheated of some marvellous experience
which is not going to go wasted on me which is why I am telling you about it

(Matt Rabito '18)

Sunflower Sutra Allen Ginsberg.

I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and sat down under the huge shade of a Southern Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the box house hills and cry.
Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron pole, companion, we thought the same thoughts of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed, surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery.
The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun sank on top of final Frisco peaks, no fish in that stream, no hermit in those mounts, just ourselves rheumy-eyed and hung-over like old bums on the riverbank, tired and wily.
Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust—
—I rushed up enchanted—it was my first sunflower, memories of Blake—my visions—Harlem and Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joes Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages, black treadless tires forgotten and unretreaded, the poem of the riverbank, condoms & pots, steel knives, nothing stainless, only the dank muck and the razor-sharp artifacts passing into the past—and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset, crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and smog and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye—
corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its face, soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays obliterated on its hairy head like a dried wire spiderweb,
leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures from the sawdust root, broke pieces of plaster fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its ear,
Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!
The grime was no man's grime but death and human locomotives,
all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid of black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt—industrial—modern—all that civilization spotting your crazy golden crown—
and those blear thoughts of death and dusty loveless eyes and ends and withered roots below, in the home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar bills, skin of machinery, the guts and innards of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely tincans with their rusty tongues alack, what more could I name, the smoked ashes of some cock cigar, the cunts of wheelbarrows and the milky breasts of cars, wornout asses out of chairs & sphincters of dynamos—all these
entangled in your mummied roots—and you there standing before me in the sunset, all your glory in your form!
A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent lovely sunflower existence! a sweet natural eye to the new hip moon, woke up alive and excited grasping in the sunset shadow sunrise golden monthly breeze!
How many flies buzzed round you innocent of your grime, while you cursed the heavens of the railroad and your flower soul?
Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a flower? when did you look at your skin and decide you were an impotent dirty old locomotive? the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and shade of a once powerful mad American locomotive?
You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!
And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive, forget me not!
So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck it at my side like a scepter,
and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul too, and anyone who'll listen,
—We're not our skin of grime, we're not dread bleak dusty imageless locomotives, we're golden sunflowers inside, blessed by our own seed & hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our own eyes under the shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening sitdown vision.

(Matt Rabito '18)

We Who Are Your Closest Friends **Phillip Lopate.**

we who are
your closest friends
feel the time
has come to tell you
that every Thursday
we have been meeting
as a group
to devise ways
to keep you
in perpetual uncertainty
frustration
discontent and
torture
by neither loving you
as much as you want
nor cutting you adrift

your analyst is
in on it

“I think paranoia gets a bad rap. I like this poem because it tips you off to the absurdity of your own feelings, and I like it because it's funny. But it also hints at the fact that the opposite of paranoia — that nothing is meaningfully connected to anything else, that no one knows what they're doing — might be a sadder and scarier condition in which to live (the real world).”

(Mac Simonson, '16)

For Something I Know Too Well to Name Shinji Moon.

How often it is that we turn each other
into metaphors, months into men, this summer a summer
that belongs to us and us alone.

And you, had we not been somewhat in love that May,
all those years ago, would the post office still equate a
secret, would a yellow taxi still mean leaving, and would
a train platform still make me cry when dusk hits in Manhattan?

Mark Doty's partner died after AIDS and everything he has seen since
has looked like loss. Sylvia Plath killed herself and afterwards, people
could only approach ovens with apologies and remorse.

The flowers in our common room keep dying. The
fruit in the bowl is always barely there.

How many times do we say goodbye before we leave? How
many times do we pretend that absence makes the heart grow
fonder?

Once, I believed in you like a poem, turned your heart
into a metaphor for my heart, turned our months into honey and
caramel lozenges,

But metaphors come, and metaphors go, and
not even seasons have the courtesy to stay till dawn.

“Something that Dartmouth has taught me how to do via the D-plan is to refrain from ascribing a lot of meaning to small interactions and to accept the transience of relationships. Shinji Moon touches on this idea in this poem and I love that I can relate so strongly to the experience of grasping onto fragments in desperation and eventually acknowledging a departure.”

(Tiantian Zhang '16)

**From “Ash Wednesday”
T.S. Eliot.**

At the first turning of the second stair
I turned and saw below
The same shape twisted on the banister
Under the vapour in the fetid air
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears
The deceitful face of hope and of despair.
At the second turning of the second stair
I left them twisting, turning below;
There were no more faces and the stair was dark,
Damp, jagged, like an old man's mouth drivelling, beyond repair,
Or the toothed gullet of an aged shark.
At the first turning of the third stair
Was a slotted window bellied like the figs's fruit
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene
The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute.
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
Lilac and brown hair;
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair
Climbing the third stair.
Lord, I am not worthy
Lord, I am not worthy
but speak the word only.

/.../

Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee.

“I love the eternally recurring motif of the spiral staircase, the DNA helix, infinity spiral.
How we turn, turn again, seek not to turn but do, even when our spiritual wings seem
"but empty vans" to beat the air. Christ meets us there, in the turning, the reorienting,
the conversion.

"Suffer me not to be separated from thee. "

This most poignant and powerful poem of self-curse and God-blessing.”

(Catharine Randall, *Religion*)

**Rolls In
Tyler Knott Gregson.**

The fog comes
when you go
and it's too bad
that wishing it
would clear
and wishing you
were here
doesn't make it
so.

“Tyler followed me on tumblr (which used to be full of reblogged Bukowski quotes, sorry not sorry) when I was in high school, and I admire how prolific he's been with his writing. He does a daily haiku on love in addition to posting longer poems, such as this one. And even though it's simple and short, it captures a lot in just a few lines, and it's quite beautiful.”
(Tiantian Zhang '16)

anyone lived in a pretty how town
E.E. Cummings.

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

"I came across that poem when I was doing a project on E.E. Cummings in high school and I found it in a folder in my room while I was cleaning it out winter break of senior year. Its cyclicity was really appealing to me, especially when I'm coming to the end of a part of my life soon (Dartmouth)."

(Emily Rutherford '16)

Raw with Love
Charles Bukowski.

little dark girl with
kind eyes
when it comes time to
use the knife
I won't flinch and
i won't blame
you,
as I drive along the shore alone
as the palms wave,
the ugly heavy palms,
as the living does not arrive
as the dead do not leave,
i won't blame you,
instead
i will remember the kisses
our lips raw with love
and how you gave me
everything you had
and how I
offered you what was left of
me,
and I will remember your small room
the feel of you
the light in the window
your records
your books
our morning coffee
our noons our nights
our bodies spilled together
sleeping
the tiny flowing currents
immediate and forever
your leg my leg
your arm my arm
your smile and the warmth
of you
who made me laugh
again.
little dark girl with kind eyes
you have no
knife. the knife is
mine and i won't use it
Yet.

(Tiantian Zhang '16)

**My heart leaps up when I behold
William Wordsworth.**

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die! The child is father of the man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

(Myles McMurchy '16)

Perhaps the World Ends Here **Joy Harjo.**

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.

(Myles McMurphy '16)

A New Lifestyle James Tate.

People in this town drink too much
coffee. They're jumpy all the time. You
see them drinking out of their big plastic
mugs while they're driving. They cut in
front of you, they steal your parking places.
Teenagers in the cemeteries knocking over
tombstones are slurping café au lait.
Recycling men hanging onto their trucks are
sipping espresso. Dogcatchers running down
the street with their nets are savoring
their cups of mocha java. The holdup man
entering a convenience store first pours
himself a nice warm cup of coffee. Down
the funeral parlor driveway a boy on a
skateboard is spilling his. They're so
serious about their coffee, it's all they
can think about, nothing else matters.
Everyone's wide awake but looks incredibly
tired.

*"My best friend in college was a poet, and she introduced me most of the poems and poets that I
love. This one by James Tate always reminds me of her."*
(Patricia Stuelke, English)

Odes, iv, 7
Horace.

Diffugere niues, redeunt iam gramina
campis
 arboribusque comae;
mutat terra uices et decrescentia ripas
 flumina praetereunt;
Gratia cum Nymphis geminisque
sororibus audet 5
 ducere nuda choros.
Immortalia ne speres, monet annus et
almum
 quae rapit hora diem.
Frigora mitescunt Zephyris, uer proterit
aestas
 interitura,
simul
10
pomifer autumnus fruges effuderit, et
mox
 bruma recurrit iners.
Damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia
lunae:
 nos ubi decidimus
quo pater Aeneas, quo diues Tullus et
Ancus, 15
 pulis et umbra sumus.
Quis scit an adiciant hodiernae crastina
summae
 tempora di superi?
Cuncta manus auidas fugient heredis,
amico
 quae dederis
animo. 2
0
Cum semel occideris et de te splendida
Minos
 fecerit arbitria,
non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia,
non te
 restituēt pietas;
infernīs neque enim tenebris Diana
pudicum 25
 liberat Hippolytum,
nec Lethaea ualet Theseus abrumpere
caro
 uincula Pirithoo.

Trans. Alfred Edward Housman

The snows are fled away, leaves on the
shaws
And grasses in the mead renew their
birth,
The river to the river-bed withdraws,
And altered is the fashion of the earth.

The Nymphs and Graces three put off
their fear
And unapparelled in the woodland play.
The swift hour and the brief prime of the
year
Say to the soul, Thou wast not born for
aye.

Thaw follows frost; hard on the heel of
spring
Treads summer sure to die, for hard on
hers
Comes autumn with his apples
scattering;
Then back to wintertide, when nothing
stirs.

But oh, whate'er the sky-led seasons
mar,
Moon upon moon rebuilds it with her
beams;
Come we where Tullus and where Ancus
are
And good Aeneas, we are dust and
dreams.

Torquatus, if the gods in heaven shall
add
The morrow to the day, what tongue has
told?
Feast then thy heart, for what thy heart
has had
The fingers of no heir will ever hold.

When thou descendest once the shades
among,
The stern assize and equal judgment
o'er,

Not thy long lineage nor thy golden
tongue,
No, nor thy righteousness, shall friend
thee more.

Night holds Hippolytus the pure of
stain,
Diana steads him nothing, he must stay;
And Theseus leaves Pirithous in the
chain
The love of comrades cannot take away.

“This is a lyric poem by the ancient Roman writer Horace and, below that, its translation by the 19th/20th c. English classicist and poet A. E. Housman. It’s one of those cases where one has to wonder which of the two is more beautiful - a fruitless yet satisfying conundrum. The question was posed to good effect in Tom Stoppard’s play, *The Invention of Love*. At a time when Dartmouth wearies of the Winter and looks forward to the Spring, the poem will come as a bit of a downer. Don’t all thank me at once.

Those needing a quick pick-me-up are referred to this poem by the contemporary English writer Gyles Brandreth:

Ode to a Goldfish

O
Wet
Pet!

The two poems aren’t entirely unrelated, I suppose. Like people, goldfish have a troubling habit of dying on one. So maybe not an effective pick-me-up after all.”

(Pramit Chaudhuri, Classics Department)

The Fury Of Sunsets
Anne Sexton.

Something
cold is in the air,
an aura of ice
and phlegm.
All day I've built
a lifetime and now
the sun sinks to
undo it.
The horizon bleeds
and sucks its thumb.
The little red thumb
goes out of sight.
And I wonder about
this lifetime with myself,
this dream I'm living.
I could eat the sky
like an apple
but I'd rather
ask the first star:
why am I here?
why do I live in this house?
who's responsible?
eh?

(Anonymous '16)

Der Panther **Rainer Maria Rilke.**

Im Jardin des Plantes, Paris

Sein Blick ist vom Vorübergehn der Stäbe
so müd geworden, dass er nichts mehr hält.
Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe
und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.

Der weiche Gang geschmeidig starker
Schritte,
der sich im allerkleinsten Kreise dreht,
ist wie ein Tanz von Kraft um eine Mitte,
in der betäubt ein großer Wille steht.

Nur manchmal schiebt der Vorhang der
Pupille
sich lautlos auf -. Dann geht ein Bild hinein,
geht durch der Glieder angespannte Stille -
und hört im Herzen auf zu sein.

The Panther
Trans. Walter Arndt

His gaze has been so worn by the procession
Of bars that it no longer makes a bond.
Around, a thousand bars seem to be
flashing,
And in their flashing show no world beyond.
The lissom steps which round out and re-
enter
That tightest circuit of their turning drill
Are like a dance of strength about a center
Wherein there stands benumbed a mighty
will.
Only from time to time the pupil's shutter
Will draw apart: an image enters then,
To travel through the tautened body's utter
Stillness--and in the heart to end.

“One of my favorite translations is by Walter Arndt, a former Dartmouth colleague, and a real Mensch!

I read this poem first when I was a student in a Gymnasium in Germany and mostly bored by what we did in Deutschunterricht. This poem about an animal's experience being kept prisoner in a small cage in a zoo was a real eye opener. It has profoundly changed how I look at animals, not only in the zoo but in general. (A short story by Julio Cortazar, "Axolotl," had a similar impact on me).

Since I was a pubescent young man at the time, I also discovered a wonderful parody by Robert Gernhardt, which I also love:

Der Panther

Der Panther, der Panther -
erst lag er, dann stand er,
worauf er so erschreck,
dass er gleich wieder lag.
Robert Gernhardt “

(Gerd Gemünden, German Studies Department)

Under der linden

Walther von der Vogelweide / Translated by Raymond Oliver.

Under the lime tree
Under the lime tree
On the heather,
Where we had shared a place of rest,
Still you may find there,
Lovely together,
Flowers crushed and grass down-pressed.
Beside the forest in the vale,
Táandaradéi,
Sweetly sang the nightingale.
I came to meet him
At the green:
There was my true love come before.
Such was I greeted —
Heaven's Queen! —
That I am glad for evermore.
Had he kisses? A thousand some:
Táandaradéi,
See how red my mouth's become.
There he had fashioned
For luxury
A bed from every kind of flower.
It sets to laughing
Delightedly
Whoever comes upon that bower;
By the roses well one may,
Táandaradéi,
Mark the spot my head once lay.
If any knew
He lay with me
(May God forbid!), for shame I'd die.
What did he do?
May none but he
Ever be sure of that — and I,
And one extremely tiny bird,
Táandaradéi,
Who will, I think, not say a word.

Under der linden
Under der linden
an der heide,
dâ unser zweier bette was,
dâ muget ir vinden
schône beide
gebrochen bluomen unde gras.
Vor dem walde in einem tal,
tandaradei,
schône sanc diu nahtegal.
Ich kam gegangen
zuo der ouwe:
dô was mîn friedel komen ê.
Dâ wart ich empfangen
(hêre frouwe!)
daz ich bin sælic iemer mê.
Kust er mich?
Wol tûsentstunt:
tandaradei,
seht wie rôt mir ist der munt.
Dô hete er gemachet
alsô rîche
von bluomen eine bettestat.
Des wirt noch gelachet
inneclîche,
kumt iemen an daz selbe pfat:
bî den rôsen er wol mac,
tandaradei,
merken wâ mir'z houbet lac.
Daz er bî mir læge,
wesse'z iemen
(nu enwelle got!), so schamte ich mich.
Wes er mit mir pflæge,
niemer niemen
bevinde daz, wan er und ich,
und ein kleinez vogellîn:
tandaradei,
daz mac wol getriuwe sîn.

“I came to fully appreciate the playfulness of this poem by one of Germany’s most prolific medieval courtly poets Walther von der Vogelweide as a graduate student of medieval literature and culture. What I still find most striking is the way in which Walther plays with the taboo of courtly versus consummated love. It is highly intriguing how the poem’s female voice relates an otherwise unrelatable event about a forbidden relationship, thus meeting and disregarding audience expectations at the same time.”

(Nicolay Ostrau, German Studies Department)

“Mondnacht”
Joseph von Eichendorff.

Es war, als hätt' der Himmel
Die Erde still geküßt,
Daß sie im Blütenschimmer
Von ihm nur träumen müßt
Die Luft ging durch die Felder,
Die Ähren wogten sacht,
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,
So sternklar war die Nacht.
Und meine Seele spannte
Weit ihre Flügel aus,
Flog durch die stillen Lande,
Als flöge sie nach Haus.

It was as if the heavens
Had silently kissed the earth,
Which now must dream of them
In shimmering fruition.
The breeze blew through the fields,
The heads of grain swayed softly,
The forests quietly rustled,
So star-clear was the night.
And my soul unfurled
Her wings to their full extent,
Flew through the silent fields,
As if returning home.

“Its nocturnal natural setting and subjective spirituality make this the quintessential German Romantic poem. It is verbal music by itself, but even better in Schumann’s setting for voice and piano.”

(Ellis Shookman, German Studies Department)

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)

On a cherry tree
the last leaf of autumn hangs
yearning to be free

“I don’t even know any Japanese. I teach modern and classical literature: German, English, French, Latin, ancient Greek. And yet, this week anyway, this English translation of a haiku/hokku by Basho wins.

It’s all there, in just seventeen syllables: a striking natural image; the melancholy of endings; the excitement of uncertain beginnings; bravely hanging on; bravely letting go; life and death and life and their inextricability; the loneliness of historical lateness (probably a modern Western projection, that); the mystical desire to escape oppressive individualization and to dissolve, to return to ..., hmm, ... return to what?; seniors contemplating graduation; old teachers contemplating retirement; the perversity of thinking about autumn just as spring is starting.

It’s “Do not go gentle into that good night” and “Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new”, both at the same time.”

(Eric Miller, Department of German Studies)

Variation on the Word Sleep Margaret Atwood.

I would like to watch you sleeping,
which may not happen.
I would like to watch you,
sleeping. I would like to sleep
with you, to enter
your sleep as its smooth dark wave
slides over my head

and walk with you through that lucent
wavering forest of bluegreen leaves
with its watery sun & three moons
towards the cave where you must descend,
towards your worst fear

I would like to give you the silver
branch, the small white flower, the one
word that will protect you
from the grief at the center
of your dream, from the grief
at the center. I would like to follow
you up the long stairway
again & become
the boat that would row you back
carefully, a flame
in two cupped hands
to where your body lies
beside me, and you enter
it as easily as breathing in

I would like to be the air
that inhabits you for a moment
only. I would like to be that unnoticed
& that necessary.

“The first time I read this out loud was to a very small audience, at night, outside, the sky just about to go black from blue. Thank goodness for poems like this that sing the nooks and scary footpaths of desire. It’s funny, how often poets and songwriters use the 2nd person, and how seldom prose writers do.”

(Alice Wang ’16)

The Afternoon Sun
Constantine Cavafy / Translated by Edmund Keely and
Philip Sherrard.

Ο ΗΛΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΓΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ

Τὴν κάμαρην αὐτὴ, πόσο καλά τὴν ξέρω.
Τώρα νοικιάζονται κι αὐτὴ κ' ἡ πλαγινὴ
γιὰ ἐμπορικὰ γραφεῖα. Ὅλο τὸ σπίτι ἔγινε
γραφεῖα μεσιτῶν, κ' ἐμπόρων, κ' Ἐταιρεῖε

Ἄ ἡ κάμαρην αὐτὴ, τί γνώριμη ποὺ εἶναι.

Κοντὰ στὴν πόρτα ἐδῶ ἦταν ὁ καναπές,
κ' ἐμπρὸς τοῦ ἑνα τουρκικὸ χαλί·
σιμὰ τὸ ράφι μὲ δυὸ βάζα κίτρινα.
Δεξιὰ· ὄχι, ἀντικρὺ, ἕνα ντολάπι μὲ καθρέ
Στὴ μέση τὸ τραπέζι ὅπου ἔγραφε·
κ' ἡ τρεῖς μεγάλες ψάθινες καρέγλες.
Πλάι στὸ παράθυρο ἦταν τὸ κρεββάτι
ποὺ ἀγαπηθήκαμε τόσες φορές.

Θὰ βρίσκονται ἀκόμη τὰ καυμένα πουθενά

Πλάι στὸ παράθυρο ἦταν τὸ κρεββάτι·
ὁ ἥλιος τοῦ ἀπογεύματος τῶφθανε ὡς τὰ |

... Ἀπόγευμα ἡ ὥρα τέσσερες, εἶχαμε χω
γιὰ μιὰ ἐβδομάδα μόνο... Ἀλλοίμονον,
ἡ ἐβδομάς ἐκείνη ἔγινε παντοτινὴ.

THE AFTERNOON SUN

This room, how well I know it.
Now they're renting it, and the one next
to it,
as offices. The whole house has
become
an office building for agents, merchants,
companies.

This room, how familiar it is.
Here, near the door, was the couch,
a Turkish carpet in front of it.
Close by, the shelf with two yellow
vases.

On the right—no, opposite—a wardrobe
with a mirror.

In the middle the table where he wrote,
and the three big wicker chairs.
Beside the window was the bed
where we made love so many times.
They must still be around somewhere,
those old things.

Beside the window was the bed;
the afternoon sun fell across half of it.
...One afternoon at four o'clock we
separated
for a week only...And then—
that week became forever.

"I first learned of Cavafy and of modern Greek literature, really, in a survey class in my sophomore year at Harvard. The Greek government had just funded the first endowed chair of Modern Greek Studies in the United States and the first incumbment was George P. Savidis, a polyglot and renaissance man, who had known many important poets personally and who had edited the definitive editions of many of their collected works. He had become the administrator of the Cavafy archive, for instance. So getting to study with such a person was a real thrill for me and inspired me to share my love of German and English literature with a developing love of Greek literature (hence an eventual Fulbright year of study in Greece and a PhD in Comparative Literature). One of the things George Savidis helped us understand about Cavafy was that he was

meticulous, obsessive really, about culling and presenting his poems in a certain order. For that reason, it's hard for me to think of only one of his poems at a time.

I selected "The Afternoon Sun" because it's short, and it has many of the features I really admire in Cavafy: a concern with eroticism and with how memory functions, specifically with how the senses and physical objects "carry" memory. Further, it illustrates some of the reasons why translation is always inadequate to convey the original poem.

In the Modern Greek language, you don't need to state the grammatical subject; that's conveyed by the verb form. So Cavafy was able to talk about lovers without making explicit their gender. That's obviously lost in the translation into English.

Another reason why I selected this poem is because Cavafy composed certain lines, certain phrases, that I not only never forgot, but that also carry so much meaning for me that they have popped into my head at times to make sense of something going on for me at a specific moment.

From this poem it's the single line stanza: "They must still be around somewhere, those old things." In the original Greek, that line is even more evocative through the word translated here as "old": *καυμένα*. For one thing, it means something more like "poor" than old and for another, in Greek, adjectives can become nouns, so in the original there's just the adjective, *καυμένα*, you don't need the word «things». That affects the rhythm of the line and allows the word «somewhere» (*πουθενά*) to be the last word in the line. Physical objects have been important to me in my life for how they carry memory of people I have known and loved. This line brought up for me how sad it is that objects that were once so precious to somebody can end up with others who don't treasure them, or in a warehouse, or a dump, for that matter. I love that the persona of the poem pauses to consider where those pieces of furniture are right now, just as he pauses to look and remember the reach of the sunlight in the room."

(Irene Kacandes, Department of German Studies)

**From Out the Cave
From Joyce Sutphen.**

When you have been
at war with yourself
for so many years that
you have forgotten why,
when you have been driving
for hours and only
gradually begin to realize
that you have lost the way,
when you have cut
hastily into the fabric,
when you have signed
papers in distraction,
when it has been centuries
since you watched the sun set
or the rain fall, and the clouds,
drifting overhead, pass as flat
as anything on a postcard;
when, in the midst of these
everyday nightmares, you
understand that you could
wake up,
you could turn
and go back
to the last thing you
remember doing
with your whole heart:
that passionate kiss,
the brilliant drop of love
rolling along the tongue of a green leaf,
then you wake,
you stumble from your cave,
blinking in the sun,
naming every shadow
as it slips.

(Anonymous '16)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers - (314)
Emily Dickinson.

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

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

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

This is a short and sweet poem I came across during high-school that really lifted my spirits at a time I needed it to. I didn't come to any deep and meaningful revelations, but suddenly I began to equate all of the feelings of butterflies in my stomach to the feelings of hope. I began to understand how in those moments I really was hoping for something more and that's why I felt that way - because hope has feathers and it's fluttering through my soul. And now I am very in tune with the feeling of flying in my stomach because it's naturally a way to pause and recollect my thoughts on what I'm really hoping for in a certain situation.

(Shay Vellanki '16)

Dover Beach **Matthew Arnold.**

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

“I remember reading this poem for the first time in my 11th grade British literature class. I resonated with how Arnold articulated a certain desire for faith, beauty and wonder that he believed to be lost in British society. Yet, at the same time he maintains a hope for love in the world, and hence he encourages a new generation to live in peace.”

(Marylynne Sitko, '16)

Marylynne shared this poem with me a couple of years ago. It reminds me that loneliness, suffering, and uncertainty are part of the human experience - and yet the poem also feels uplifting in some ways.

(Julia Marino, '17)

In Memoriam A. H. H. OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII: 27
Lord Alfred Tennyson.

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

“My favorite poem right now is “I envy not in any moods,” which I’m sure you know is Tennyson. But it’s not the last line that’s my favorite, the “better to have loved and lost” bit—I think it’s too bad that’s the only part of this poem people know. The poem is about so much more than love; it’s about not just “stepping” delicately out of your comfort zone, but vaulting—pushing the power of the human experience and living life until it overflows. You might make some mistakes, but that’s what a conscience is for, and we are better for it.

‘I envy not in any moods / The captive void of noble rage.’

COME ON, THAT’S AWESOME.”

(Cecilia Robinson, ‘16)

The Loch Ness Monster's Song Edwin Morgan.

Sssnnwhufffl?
Hnwhuffl hhnwfl hnfl hfl?
Gdroblboblhobngbl gbl gl g g g glbgl.
Drubhaflabhaflubhafgabhaflhafl fl fl –
gm grawwww grf grawf awfgm graw gm.
Hovoplodok – doplodovok – plovodokot-doplodokosh?
Splgraw fok fok splgrafhatchgabrlgabrl fok splfok!
Zgra kra gka fok!
Grof grawff gahf?
Gombl mbl bl –
blm plm,
blm plm,
blm plm,
blp.

“I think it speaks for itself, but when you read it aloud something magical happens—you hear it rise above the water and go back below the surface. I like it because it's fun and playful and quirky and shows that poetry doesn't have to be serious. It's the kind of thing that just makes you smile when you read it aloud and the neurons fire and connect.”

(Cecelia Robinson, '16)

For John, Who Begg Me Not To Enquire Further Anne Sexton.

Not that it was beautiful,
but that, in the end, there was
a certain sense of order there;
something worth learning
in that narrow diary of my mind,
in the commonplaces of the asylum
where the cracked mirror
or my own selfish death
outstared me.
And if I tried
to give you something else,
something outside of myself,
you would not know
that the worst of anyone
can be, finally,
an accident of hope.
I tapped my own head;
it was a glass, an inverted bowl.
It is a small thing
to rage in your own bowl.
At first it was private.
Then it was more than myself;
it was you, or your house
or your kitchen.
And if you turn away
because there is no lesson here
I will hold my awkward bowl,
with all its cracked stars shining
like a complicated lie,
and fasten a new skin around it
as if I were dressing an orange
or a strange sun.
Not that it was beautiful,
but that I found some order there.
There ought to be something special
for someone
in this kind of hope.
This is something I would never find
in a lovelier place, my dear,
although your fear is anyone's fear,
like an invisible veil between us all...
and sometimes in private,
my kitchen, your kitchen,
my face, your face.

“I’ve found that the hardest part of senior year—of Dartmouth in general, actually—has been trying to believe in accidents of hope. Something about the way that hope and pain are held so closely together here, so close that they start to look like the same thing, resonated. The obsession with turning inward and digging as deep as you can—it’s intoxicating I think.”

(Lacey Jones, '16)

Such Silence
Mary Oliver.

As deep as I ever went into the forest
I came upon an old stone bench, very, very old,
and around it a clearing, and beyond that
trees taller and older than I had ever seen.
Such silence!
It really wasn't so far from a town, but it seemed
all the clocks in the world had stopped counting.
So it was hard to suppose the usual rules applied.
Sometimes there's only a hint, a possibility.
What's magical, sometimes, has deeper roots
than reason.
I hope everyone knows that.
I sat on the bench, waiting for something.
An angel, perhaps.
Or dancers with the legs of goats.
No, I didn't see either. But only, I think, because
I didn't stay long enough.

*I love this poem because it reminds me that I don't need to have the answers for everything
and that sometimes being comfortable sitting with doubt is what leads you to the discovery
of your deeper self.*
(Caitlin Zellers, '16)

Outwitted
Edwin Markham.

He drew a circle that shut me out--
Heretic, a rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle and took him in!

I like how the physical movement suggested by "took him in" is both established and nullified by the line in the same moment; how the same action taken in lines 1 and 4 casually leads to opposite results; and how each line exists in a rhyme-like relationship with each of the others. And I like the sentiment, which seems like a sound and sadly neglected approach to dealing with problems of all kinds between people.

(Professor Gamboa, English)

This Be The Verse Phillip Larkin.

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do.
They fill you with the faults they had
And add some extra, just for you.

But they were fucked up in their turn
By fools in old-style hats and coats,
Who half the time were sippy-stern
And half at one another's throats.

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf.
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself.

"I can't choose a favorite poem, so I'm sending on the two that have most influenced my own writing. Not the loveliest or the most profound, certainly not poems written in any manner similar to the way I use language, but nonetheless two poems that lodged themselves in my consciousness at different times and decided to stay there.

The first is "This Be The Verse," by the British librarian Philip Larkin, who, very impressively, I think, turned down the post of Poet Laureate. When I went to college, my father gave me as a present a subscription to the British literary journal Granta. I don't think I read anything in it until issue no. 37 -- I looked it up -- arrived with a slip sheet over the cover. "The Family," read the spine. When the slip sheet fell away, the thought was completed on the cover, mostly blank burgundy but for the words, "They fuck you up" -- no punctuation. The phrase never left me, but it was years before I learned its origin."

(Jeff Sharlet, English)

Poetry Marianne Moore.

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond
all this fiddle.

Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one
discovers in

it after all, a place for the genuine.

Hands that can grasp, eyes

that can dilate, hair that can rise

if it must, these things are important not because a

high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because
they are

useful. When they become so derivative as to become
unintelligible,

the same thing may be said for all of us, that we
do not admire what

we cannot understand: the bat

holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless
wolf under

a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse

that feels a flea, the base-

ball fan, the statistician--

nor is it valid

to discriminate against "business documents and

school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make
a distinction

however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the
result is not poetry,

nor till the poets among us can be

"literalists of

the imagination"--above

insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, "imaginary gardens with real toads in them,"
shall we have

it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,

the raw material of poetry in

all its rawness and

that which is on the other hand

genuine, you are interested in poetry.

"The second is "Poetry," the much-revised poem by Marianne Moore. I think this is the original 1919 version. I came to it through my friend Jeff Allred's book American Modernism and Depression Documentary, in which he borrows part of a line from Moore -- " 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them' " -- to describe not poetry in particular but documentary art in general. Since then I've taken the phrase for my own mutant genre, the so-called "art of fact" that I began to consider in earnest back in 1991, in the pages of Granta. I came upon the line in Jeff Allred's book, but I found the whole poem waiting on my shelf, in the poetry collection I inherited from my mother when she died, which was not long before my Granta subscription began. "They fuck you up, your mum and dad," wrote Larkin, which is a real toad of a true enough fact, but then there are also the gardens they leave behind."

(Jeff Sharlet, English)

Ode on a Grecian Urn John Keats.

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

"My mom wrote this and only this in my card when I graduated from high school, and I'm still trying to figure out why she did that and what it means, but I think that's what's great about poems: you could spend your life reading only one and still never extract all of its meaning!"
(Caroline Koller, '18)

Twinkletoes A.A. Milne.

When the sun
Shines through the leaves of the apple-tree,
When the sun
Makes shadows of the leaves of the apple-tree,
Then I pass
On the grass
From one leaf to another,
From one leaf to its brother,
Tip-toe, tip-toe!
Here I go!

"I have to say that most of the poetry I've read over the last 15 years has involved reading to/with my kids. Hence, you get an A.A. Milne poem. That said, I love this one because it reminds of the days when my kids were little running under the apple trees that adorned the edge of our property in upstate New York. It also reminds me of the spirit with which my husband shared nature with those that he loved, especially our 3 children. He was killed by a drunk driver when my children were 2, 4, and 8—poems like this one help to remind my children of their dad's spirit, a spirit I believe runs through them, is a part of them."

(Bruch Lehmann, English)

The Entrance
Rilke / Translated by Edward Snow.

Whoever you are: in the evening step out
of your room, where you know everything;
yours is the last house before the far-off:
whoever you are.

With your eyes, which in their weariness
barely free themselves from the worn-out threshold,
you lift very slowly one black tree
and place it against the sky: slender, alone.
And you have made the world. And it is huge
and like a word which grows ripe in silence.
And as your will seizes on its meaning,
tenderly your eyes let it go. . .

“I had been tired and worn for so long. Then the words fell clear and sturdy through the gritty
darkness of the dive bar, and lifted me back into my world.”
(Claire Park, ‘16)

A Litany for Survival Audre Lorde.

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours:

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother's milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us
For all of us
this instant and this triumph
We were never meant to survive.

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are afraid
of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive

(Anonymous '13)

In this Light
Carl Phillips.

Sure, I used to say his name like a truth that, just
by saying it aloud, I could make more true, which
makes no more sense than having called it sorrow,
when it was only the rain making the branches hang
more heavily, so that some of them, sometimes,
even touched the ground...I see that now. I can see

how easy it is to confuse estrangement with what
comes before that, what's really just another form
of being lost – lost, and trying to spell out wordlessly,
hand-lessly, the difference between I fell and Sir,
I'm falling. As for emptiness spilling where no one
ever wanted it to, and becoming compassion, as for

how that happens – What if all we do is all we
can do? What if longing, annihilation, regret are all this
life's ever going to be, a little music thrown across and
under it, ghost-song from a cricket-box when the last
crickets have again gone silent, *now, or be still forever*,
as the gathering crowd, ungathering, slowly backs away?

“The silence is most terrifying”
(Claire Park, '16)

The Rain Robert Creeley.

All night the sound had
come back again,
and again falls
this quiet, persistent rain.

What am I to myself
that must be remembered,
insisted upon
so often? Is it

that never the ease,
even the hardness,
of rain falling
will have for me

something other than this,
something not so insistent—
am I to be locked in this
final uneasiness.

Love, if you love me,
lie next to me.
Be for me, like rain,
the getting out

of the tiredness, the fatuousness, the semi-
lust of intentional indifference.
Be wet
with a decent happiness.

“I like this poem because its narrator worries that their liminality might stagnate, lose its potential for becoming. I like the vulnerability of the speaker’s questions—and the way that the poem’s punctuation sometimes makes them fall out of being questions and instead become moments of gentle resignation. Like sighs.

But the poem has hope too, and the escape that it proposes is quiet and simple. It’s about finding redemption and interruption that doesn’t have to look like a road to Damascus moment. A fragile hope, found in another person, that is somehow enough. This poem makes me ache for that. Makes me trust it.

And the language—“the semi-lust of intentional indifference”—my god. Does it get more perfect than that?”

(Lacey Jones '16)

The Ballad Of Lucy Jordan Shel Silverstein.

The morning sun touched lightly on
The eyes of Lucy Jordan
In her white suburban bedroom
In a white suburban town,
As she lay there 'neath the covers,
Dreaming of a thousand lovers,
Till the world turned to orange
And the room went spinning 'round.

At the age of 37
She realized she'd never ride
Through Paris in a sports car
With the warm wind in her hair.
So she let the phone keep ringing
As she sat there, softly singing
Little nursery rhymes she'd memorized
In her daddy's easy chair.

Her husband is off to work,
And the kids are off to school,
And there were, oh, so many ways
For her to spend the day:
She could clean the house for hours
Or rearrange the flowers
Or run naked through the shady streets,
Screaming all the way!

At the age of 37
She realized she'd never ride
Through Paris in a sports car
With the warm wind in her hair.
So she let the phone keep ringing
As she sat there, softly singing
Little nursery rhymes she'd memorized
In her daddy's easy chair.

The evening sun touched gently on
The eyes of Lucy Jordan
On the roof top, where she climbed
When all the laughter grew too loud.
And she bowed and curtsied to the man
Who reached and offered her his hand,
And he led her down to the long white car
That waited past the crowd.

At the age of 37
She knew she'd found forever,
As she rolled along through Paris
With the warm wind in her hair.
(Shinri Kamei, '16)

Sick Shel Silverstein.

"I cannot go to school today,"
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.
"I have the measles and the mumps,
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,
I'm going blind in my right eye.
My tonsils are as big as rocks,
I've counted sixteen chicken pox
And there's one more--that's seventeen,
And don't you think my face looks green?
My leg is cut--my eyes are blue--
It might be instamatic flu.
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
I'm sure that my left leg is broke--
My hip hurts when I move my chin,
My belly button's caving in,
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,
My 'pendix pains each time it rains.
My nose is cold, my toes are numb.
I have a sliver in my thumb.
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,
I hardly whisper when I speak.
My tongue is filling up my mouth,
I think my hair is falling out.
My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,
My temperature is one-o-eight.
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,
There is a hole inside my ear.
I have a hangnail, and my heart is--what?
What's that? What's that you say?
You say today is. . .Saturday?
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

Wastebasket Brother Shel Silverstein.

Someone put their baby brother
Under this basket- -
The question is exactly why,
But I'm not going to ask it.
But someone, I ain't sayin' who,
Has got a guilty face,
Ashamed for lettin' such a lovely brother
Go to waste.

I remember that the books of Shel Silverstein's poems were the first books I remember reading over and over again growing up. The poems always made me laugh/cringe, and just thinking about them today make me happy.

(Shinri Kamei, '16)

Cigarettes And Whiskey And Wild, Wild Women Anne Sexton.

(from a song)

Perhaps I was born kneeling,
born coughing on the long winter,
born expecting the kiss of mercy,
born with a passion for quickness
and yet, as things progressed,
I learned early about the stockade
or taken out, the fume of the enema.
By two or three I learned not to kneel,
not to expect, to plant my fires underground
where none but the dolls, perfect and awful,
could be whispered to or laid down to die.

Now that I have written many words,
and let out so many loves, for so many,
and been altogether what I always was—
a woman of excess, of zeal and greed,
I find the effort useless.
Do I not look in the mirror,
these days,
and see a drunken rat avert her eyes?
Do I not feel the hunger so acutely
that I would rather die than look
into its face?
I kneel once more,
in case mercy should come
in the nick of time.

(Anonymous '16)

Totally like whatever, you know? Taylor Mali.

In case you hadn't noticed,
it has somehow become uncool
to sound like you know what you're talking about?
Or believe strongly in what you're saying?
Invisible question marks and parenthetical (you know?)'s
have been attaching themselves to the ends of our sentences?
Even when those sentences aren't, like, questions? You know?

Declarative sentences—so--called
because they used to, like, DECLARE things to be true, okay,
as opposed to other things are, like, totally, you know, not—
have been infected by a totally hip
and tragically cool interrogative tone? You know?
Like, don't think I'm uncool just because I've noticed this;
this is just like the word on the street, you know?
It's like what I've heard?
I have nothing personally invested in my own opinions, okay?
I'm just inviting you to join me in my uncertainty?

What has happened to our conviction?
Where are the limbs out on which we once walked?
Have they been, like, chopped down
with the rest of the rain forest?
Or do we have, like, nothing to say?
Has society become so, like, totally . . .
I mean absolutely . . . You know?
That we've just gotten to the point where it's just, like . . .
whatever!

And so actually our disarticulation . . . ness
is just a clever sort of . . . thing
to disguise the fact that we've become
the most aggressively inarticulate generation
to come along since . . .
you know, a long, long time ago!

I entreat you, I implore you, I exhort you,
I challenge you: To speak with conviction.

To say what you believe in a manner that bespeaks
the determination with which you believe it.
Because contrary to the wisdom of the bumper sticker,
it is not enough these days to simply QUESTION AUTHORITY.
You have to speak with it, too.

Relevant to my life in more ways than I'd like to admit!
(Shinri Kamei, '16)

**This Year I Mean to Be an Elephant
Wendy Xu.**

I don't know if you understand me when
I say hopefully there is a future and we
are both allowed in it. I mean last year it
was OK just to be flattened by our ideas.
I sat in so many rooms and eventually felt
interesting and not like a chair. Do you
feel like a straight line? I worry about how
I don't. I worry that when I turn on
the radio this morning it sounds just like
I expect. I am thinking about kicking what
I expect in the shin. Last year I forgot
whole people until having lunch again
with those people. Last year I forgot really
embarrassing secrets like how I am allergic
to regular soap. Cue all different kinds
of light and what music makes you feel
not dead. Last night I dreamt about sand.

(Anonymous '16)

Bluebird Charles Bukowski.

there's a bluebird in my heart that
wants to get out
but I'm too tough for him,
I say, stay in there, I'm not going
to let anybody see
you.

there's a bluebird in my heart that
wants to get out
but I pour whiskey on him and inhale
cigarette smoke
and the ****s and the bartenders
and the grocery clerks
never know that
he's
in there.

there's a bluebird in my heart that
wants to get out
but I'm too tough for him,
I say,
stay down, do you want to mess
me up?
you want to screw up the
works?
you want to blow my book sales in
Europe?
there's a bluebird in my heart that
wants to get out
but I'm too clever, I only let him out
at night sometimes
when everybody's asleep.
I say, I know that you're there,
so don't be
sad.
then I put him back,
but he's singing a little
in there, I haven't quite let him
die
and we sleep together like
that
with our
secret pact
and it's nice enough to
make a man
weep, but I don't
weep, do
you?

One of my friends wrote this poem out for me and left it in my room the day of an interview that I was really nervous about. It and her friendship mean so much to me.

(Shinri Kamei, '16)

Meditation at Lagunitas
Robert Hass.

All the new thinking is about loss.
In this it resembles all the old thinking.
The idea, for example, that each particular erases
the luminous clarity of a general idea. That the clown-
faced woodpecker probing the dead sculpted trunk
of that black birch is, by his presence,
some tragic falling off from a first world
of undivided light. Or the other notion that,
because there is in this world no one thing
to which the bramble of *blackberry* corresponds,
a word is elegy to what it signifies.
We talked about it late last night and in the voice
of my friend, there was a thin wire of grief, a tone
almost querulous. After a while I understood that,
talking this way, everything dissolves: *justice,*
pine, hair, woman, you and *I*. There was a woman
I made love to and I remembered how, holding
her small shoulders in my hands sometimes,
I felt a violent wonder at her presence
like a thirst for salt, for my childhood river
with its island willows, silly music from the pleasure boat,
muddy places where we caught the little orange-silver fish
called *pumpkinseed*. It hardly had to do with her.
Longing, we say, because desire is full
of endless distances. I must have been the same to her.
But I remember so much, the way her hands dismantled bread,
the thing her father said that hurt her, what
she dreamed. There are moments when the body is as numinous
as words, days that are the good flesh continuing.
Such tenderness, those afternoons and evenings,
saying *blackberry, blackberry, blackberry.*
(Anonymous '15)