

Morning Walk with Mary Oliver - A Found Poem by Amber Bryant

As we walk, Oliver says:

I'll tell you a story.
Consider the evening
That has dipped down
One last time
Longing to be on its way.
The heaped
Ashes of the night,
The goldenrod whispering goodbye
Until it is out of sight
Doesn't everything die at last?
All the while this {is} happening
It {is} growing lighter
A white cross streaming across the sky
The world offers itself to your imagination
How everything shines in the morning light
Of the old gold song
I am stopped as the world comes back
From the heaven of leaves
The silence
Shimmering
Swings through another year
I don't know what a prayer is
I thought the earth remembered me
Such power came down from the clouds
The center of everything
As authoritative as God is supposed to be.
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

Haunting With Anne Bronte

You saw us as Currer and Ellis and Bell.
How surprising to find it was women who tell
of indelicate matters, blind passion and rage,
for and against Byron's hero and Angels of our Age.
Fueling your anger, indignation, and fear,
the unaware wings find heaven, not a sneer.

So across the dark moors, terrifying we be
Grey, Earnshaw, and Eyre too wild or too free-
floating echoes of heroes that bend the Ideal
with hideous morals unwilling to kneel
to conventions and scriptures securing a cage,
laugh the weak-winged birds, no genius assuage.

Though often my sisters and I don't agree,
Arnold, Dobell- women's trifles you see,
uncontrolled pens, bent only to love
fear not the same judgment from eyes from above.
If deep in the night, it's the vampire you desire.
Look over your shoulder, not all wings expire.

by Trina Busby

Trying to Undress TS Eliot

He was standing by a window
Looking out at the possibilities of poetry the night would hold
While clutching a cat...
A question loomed across that evening sky.
And the questions was simply why?
Why let this yellow fog invade your home
And lick the walls and window panes
And fall asleep in corners unknown
What was *this* cat's name?
I could barely remember, there were so many
And all about lay strands of their mane
On the sofa
On the floor
On the curtains
Around the door
Dropping on the plates at dinner

In the room cats come and go
I think one was named Michelangelo

I asked myself "Do I Dare?"
Over and over wondering "Do I Dare?"
Ask about all this freaking cat hair?
The poet readied himself to lie down for his evening nap
While his companions took a nip
I helped him undress,
Slipping off his suit
His hair was thinning
But I couldn't give a hoot
Because a cloud of kitty hair
Suddenly floated through the air

In his room cats come and go
I think one was named Michelangelo

There will be time, he said
To get all this animal fur off my bed
I offered to wash the cat
Hoping to help keep some hair off his back
He wouldn't hear of it
He would do that himself

So I gave up and fell asleep
In a bed of cat hair deep

From that room the cat decided to go
Yes, its name was Michelangelo

by Jennifer Christman

Climbing Stairs with Langston Hughes
By Jessy Clements

Well, let me tell you:
Life ain't no crystal stair.
Langston cried at 13
Because he lied
5 About his salvation,
And Jesus,
And he wrote about how life is so not
Fair.
But he kept goin' .
10 His dreams did not
Dry up like a raisin in the sun.
He held fast to his dreams,
And found that Life was not a
Broken-winged bird
15 That cannot fly.
He laughed,
And ate well,
And grew strong.
His dreams began to
20 *Explode*,
And he kept goin' honey
Because his soul had grown
As deep as rivers.
Besides,
25 He was beautiful.

To Anne-- my Muse

If ever words could paint of love 'twas thine.
If longing thoughts could sing 'twas mine.
Your eyes reflect the Flames of Disaster;
Questions abound in your mind hereafter.
"Your children rise up and call you blessed"
Though gender equality is considered oppressed.
A free spirit in thee is clearly defined,
A free reality is still left to find.
Embarrassed you should not be;
Even feet is something only few will see.
Don't hide your beauty for your words are rare;
Few can reach it so don't compare.

by Candace Cole Young

Putting on Billy Collins's Clothes

He was standing there without a stitch,
empty and lonely as the neighbor's barking dog.
It was a cold day in Amherst when I found him.
When the carriage stopped for me,
I went straight to the room to retrieve his dignity.

I asked him to take his clothes,
hold them up and put them on.
Her abandonment was still present.

But all he wanted to do was
stand in wonderment at his actions.
First, I forced the white shirt over his head-
He slowly raised his pants to waist level
and seemed to accept his decisions.

The complexity of a poet's actions
in twentieth century America
are not to be waved off.

Later I said to myself,
Who shames Emily?

We walked out the door and never
Spoke of this incident again.

by Tom Forrester

Gratitude to Anne Bradstreet

By Cyndi Fountain

*Dearest Anne, I thank thee so
For writing of your joy and woe.
Many nights as others slept,
Into your house fire crept.
I thank you for your metaphoric child,
Taken from your bedside pile.
I know you were angry then,
But for the Sisterhood, it was a win.
Contemplations on what to do,
No time to worry as life will ensue.
Thank you for the example you set,
As you celebrated the Savior you met.
For your absent husband's letter,
Your affection no one could express better.
Eight little ones needing your care,
What weighty burdens to bare.
Please send my thanks to your father
for instilling his love of reading in his daughter.
Dear Anne, I thank thee so.
For now I must go.*

Dream Deferred by Langston Hughes

Harlem-

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over--

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Dream Achieved by Lori Holland

Joplin-

What happens to a black boy with dream to achieve?

Does he allow a father's leaving to hold him back

Or does he find comfort and love in a grandmother's shivers?

Is he influenced by Sandburg and Whitman to join their pack

And does he shy away from truth-- Or proclaim "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"?

Harlem-

What happens to a young black man with a dream to achieve?

Does he allow poverty to hold him down- without clues?

Or does travel the world- Africa and France and Spain

And gain knowledge to write "The Weary Blues."

Does he commit to making the black theme his main?

Harlem-

What happens to a black man with a dream achieved?

Does he use his writing to speak for his cause?

And does he write my favorite poem- "Mother to Son"?

Does he receive everyone's applause

And is he honored by all the awards he has won?

Or maybe he passes away with a smile on his face-

His street renamed- "Langston's Hughes Place."

**“Tending to My Trellis:
Greenhouse Lessons with Roethke”**

Samantha Krietemeyer

We stand, surrounded by chrysanthemums,
The Michigan sun magnifying the Saginaw soil.
Overhead the streaked glass of the greenhouse
Screeches under the weight of hovering memories.
“All finite things reveal infinitude;”

(“Child on Top...”)
(biographical)
(“Child on Top...”)
(“Frau...”)
(“Far Field”)

Ted’s eyes trace the smilax,
And we hear the forgotten echo
Of the greenhouse ladder’s creak.
He smiles; my ancient leather crone,
Neither father nor lover,
Says, “We think by feeling.”
I ask, “What is there to know?”

(“Frau...”)
(“Frau...”)
(“Frau...”)
(“Frau...”)
(“Elegy for Jane”)
(“Waking”)
(“Waking”)

His thorn-bitten wrist extends,
Plotting for more than himself,
Revealing a palm caked hard by dirt.
“We learn of the eternal.”

(“Frau...”)
(“Frau...”)
(“My Papa’s Waltz”)
(“Far Field”)

I shall walk softly there
And learn by going where I have to go.

(“Waking”)
(“Waking”)

Balancing in the delight of my thought,
I hear my being dance from ear to ear;
He taught me Turn, and Counter-turn, and Stand.
Such waltzing is not easy.
I offer a sidelong pickerel smile:

(“Elegy for Jane”)
(“Waking”)
(“I Knew a Woman”)
(“My Papa’s Waltz”)
(“Elegy for Jane”)

“What’s freedom for?” I ask.
“To know eternity” is his reply.
“But who would measure eternity in days?”
He cast himself down into such a pure depth.
“Once I was something like this, mindless;
My grief was not excessive.
I have seen endless duplication of lives and objects.
Knowing the inexorable sadness,
And having seen dust from the walls of institutions,
I measure time by how a body sways.
I learned not to fear infinity.”

(“I Knew a Woman”)
(“I Knew a Woman”)
(“I Knew a Woman”)
(“Elegy for Jane”)
(“Far Field”)
(“Far Field”)
(“Dolor”)
(“Dolor”)
(“Dolor”)
(“I Knew a Woman”)
(“Far Field”)

Advice from Khalil Gibran

I find you on the seashore, famous poet, giver of advice
For where else would we meet?
Both of us are boundary dwellers
I begin "Speak to me of..."
The thought incomplete as you raise the flask to your lips,
Staring mournfully across a sea you called boundless
Miles from your heart's home.

You turn to me, a kinsman of pain, and remind me that
I am a daughter of life's longing for itself.
A wave licks your bare feet for a moment as you become lost in thought.
The flask out again.
I pretend not to see.

I tell you I have sought you out for advice.
I have lost my way.
A skylark dances above us, unconstrained by gravity.
We begin to walk between the sand and foam.
You have no answers for me, because you have no answers for yourself
Yet the words that flow from you feel like the richest wisdom.
I will let the winds of the heavens dance through my relationships,
recognize that pain represents self-knowledge,
and not fear what is beyond the sea and sky.

We part, each in search of perfection, our god-self.
Your words were music, became music.
I will never drink from the same cup,
but I will visit you often.

by Jessica Lawrence

At the DMV with Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Marlena Braun

What was once natural light, now artificially rendered,
Illuminates the dull, harsh edges of the chairs
That are lined against the looming wall
Like soldiers in anticipation of a battle miles away

Sounds from the street crescendo and abate as
The door swings open and shut, and cold air rushes in
Accompanied by Impatience,
For the minutes slide into hours while the line remains as long

Is our Time's quality dependent upon the Efficiency
With which they use theirs?
Are we slaves to the system, anxiously shifting in stiff-backed seats,
Controlled by the whims of a worker suffering from post-lunch lethargy?

An Evening Stroll with Robert

The day was almost done, still evening light, but barely.
Supper eaten, and now I ambled along the gravel road,
admiring the last of summer's blooms in the fading light.
I chanced upon an old friend of mine wandering my way.

Brief greetings were exchanged with my old acquaintance. Inquiring as to his purpose,
he confided that he was just mending the wall,
joking he was making sure that his pinecones
were all on his side of the fence.

I nodded, agreeably, and we continued our walk down the road a bit,
then once around the bend, we took the path less travelled.
The wind blew softly through the birches, swaying them left to right gracefully,
seemingly waving to us.

The soft colors of the sunset quickly faded -yellow to gold-signaling the day
is fast ending. Mumbling that his eyesight "ain't what it used to be,"
Robert suggested that we should turn back home. We did,
As we both knew the light wouldn't last. Nothing gold can stay.

We approached the cleared path to his cabin quite quickly. Robert turned
slightly and waved, continuing on his way. Fall harvest has been plentiful, and
I will deliver a basket of apples to his doorstep on the morrow.
Smiling to myself, I reflect on the good walk, the good talk, the good neighbor.

Mary Beth Lewis

Summer 2017

Nellie
by
Rocky Porch Moore

You stand in the window, the sea breeze
twirling tangled metaphors of your beard,
greying it with salt as you remember
the heady odor of inky soot

Your eyes search for me along the beach,
walking apace as your children clamor at your feet,
crutch-hoisting Timothy, Dorrine with ringlets askew
pulling you away, away from your pen, away from me

“Having is sham,” you told me as we ducked giggling
inside the Hanson, bound for Hyde Park, your golden fob
glittering protest ‘gainst the drab city, the drab day
We played at flags, waving silken banners at the swans—
the Queen’s swans—guarded clear to Newgate in their courses

Your wife knew—had to know—Pickwick truly
a chronicle of hard times: I your Paris and she
your London, a tale of two lovers doomed
to share your affections, but ‘twas the children
who brought you short of stealing away with me

The children, soot-stained to the elbow, pock-marked
and hungry—twisted faces aged by smoke-stacked
rancid air, while your own children frolic smocked
and pressed in your second best garden

I loved you, but you were haunted by their smoke-stained eyes,
windows with sea breeze twirling tangled metaphors
of your beard, your own fingers sooty with ink
caressing your pen as I walk on

*Nellie Ternan, the inspiration for Charles Dickens’ wrenching character Little Nell, was his longterm mistress.

APSI 2017
Undress a Poet Assignment
Cindy O'Rear

My Friend Will

Friends, students, and classmates, come near and hear.
I come to introduce my friend Will to you.
You ask what's in a name – I say it's all Greek to me.
Yet for this great friend, all the world was a stage.
He wrote prodigiously and was friends with a queen.
Some men have questioned his true authorship –
But they were all, ALL dishonorable in so saying.
When the groundlings shouted, Will delivered.
When the actors needed a place to perform,
Will and the Burbage Brothers built the Globe.
Since he believed brevity was the sole of wit,
I'll try not to embarrass him by rambling;
But he wouldn't mind me saying there was method to his madness.
Some men are born great, yet others like my friend Will
Work and achieve greatness!
 Good night, sweet prince!

The Transfiguration of Wilfred Owen

See the timid English teacher
Poet, Romantic, pariah,
Turn in his primer
For a pistol and a rifle.

See the lover of boys,
Fearful, shameful, faithless,
Turn into the leader of soldiers,
For the love of young men.

See the boys die,
"Guttering, choking, drowning,"
Turning from eager to rigor
For "pro patria mori."

See the lofty Lieutenant
Straining, crying, dying,
Turning into the martyr
For the boys he sacrifices.

by Reagan Rhone

Thoughts After Undressing Vincent

I may have kissed her lips, but where or why,
I do not know. Yes, in my arms, she lay
a moment; our candles burned out quickly—
they did not last the night. She thought I'd cry,
but I just smoked a cigarette and sighed,
thought about riding the ferry that day,
how merry we were; I wanted to say
I love you, presently, but chose to lie
(she's a commitment-phobe)—*darling, let's fly
our separate ways*. This fire burns, slays
me. Before you find a way to betray
me, I will forget you or die trying.
Oh, your fickle heart grabbed me in the night,
but the pleasure left with you at first light.

by Jessica Sampley

“A Smoke Break with Dylan Thomas”

Lighting a match that burns old age,
You cup a hand over your cigarette.
You were drunk again on tonight's stage,
That good night has not met you yet.

But it has no dominion, you quickly repeat,
Into the White Horse Tavern you wander;
Glasses of whiskey you happily greet,
Because talent was made to squander.

Why do you have to be this way?
Is misery all that you know?
Your bad boy image has had its day,
[More than once] You've been given a line to tow.

Check out time at the Chelsea is due,
Though I can't imagine how.
Return to Fern Hill and its marvelous view,
The time to rage would be now.

by Miranda Smith

Walking the Walt

Out of the farmhouse endlessly talking,
Whitman and I proceeded to go,
Inhaling the great, green world before us,
Patiently, I listened as his musings began
And as he spoke, I became the first object he saw
The leaves of grass growing on the sloping hill,
The lilacs blooming in the last dooryard,
The live oaks growing on edges of bayous,
The nine month's cattle at rest in the field,
The men at their work, each singing his song,
The song of the mothers working their work,
The song of the sailor readying ship for sail,
Booming loudly, "O Captain, my Captain!"
And he said some things I probably shouldn't repeat right now
Or say in the classroom because I might get in trouble.
He must have seen my surprise, but he continued to muse
Until the day turned to night with Old Walt still talking,
His bearded Quaker voice resounding, resounding,
I tried to shout out, "I am one with the tree,"
---Or something profound.
But he just removed his broad brimmed hat
And wiped his damp brow
And launched verse after verse out of himself.
Until I became weary and made my excuses,
And left him, still talking and talking,
Then I sighed, finally, peaceful at last,

And looked up in perfect silence at the stars.

by Angela Springer

“Finding a Good Man with Flannery O’Connor”

Mary

You’ve got wise blood and you know

Livin’ with your mama in Milledgeville won’t work for long

Although she’d be a good woman if there was somebody there

To shoot her every minute of her life.

The country ain’t no place for you

Since you come back from Iowa

With your fancy degree.

You and your pal Joy Hulga need a way out

And romance just might provide it.

Now a good man is hard to find

But let me help.

Don’t trust a Bible salesman

Who talks about “Chrastian service,”

Or a shirtless Misfit with no socks.

Inquire about previous incarcerations

And make sure he’s from Good Country People.

I know you set great store by your

Priests and nuns, but they don’t understand

Without someone to share it with

It’s no real pleasure in life.

---Lenée Wade

A Night with Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a place where time moves slow,
I spent an evening with a man you all know
By the name of Edgar Allan Poe.

I was in awe, and he was blind drunk
As we walked and I heard his tales.
He was a man of few words but was charming enough
As he offered me some of his ale.

He spoke of black cats, a raven, a cask,
And some girl named Annabel Lee.
I laughed as he mentioned his love of women,
And he gave a stern look to me.

I tried to explain how my students all chuckle
When they learn of his young cousin-bride.
He said in spite of the gossip their marriage stirred up
She was faithful to him 'til she died.

He continued on about a masque of red death,
A heart, and a house that fell;
Then we shared one last toast, and I suddenly awoke
To my ringing alarm clock bell.

by Stacy Cook

Claudette Tennant
Ms. Effie's APSI, Auburn
22 July, 20117

Confessing to John Donne

For God's sake hear my confession.
I know, thou, being Anglican, and I, being Anglican,
Do not inclose and privatize this holy
sacrament.
But, listen to me.

Your verse is a safe small space where,
as much you listen to my confession,
as I, with coaxing and instruction,
read your passion.

Each equation completed creates a wall with
confusion.
Each image — sometimes twice laid — I
unravel,
Conjures a lattice between our chambers,
And purpose fills our cabinet.

I can bare an awe my soul only partly
understands,
An elevation where degradation usually exists,
Bringing physical love in equal line with
spiritual devotion,
'tis heavenly to think that pure love need not be
chaste.

Confessor, such wilt thou be to me, who must,
See the stars as outer space, not heaven, as in your time.
But yearning for interstellar voyages before Discovery,
Thou hast gained my devotion.



Rops, Félicien, *Confessional*. Toledo, 1895. graphite and wash on paper. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

Going to Church with Maya Angelou

First, her voice sounding of smooth thick dripping honey
Echoes the sentiments of
The Lord's Prayer

And her eyes,
sparkling as if singing with joy hymns of celebratory life!

Then, the haughty stature of a goddess
Commanding a plea...
Upward to Heaven flings
For she knows why the caged bird sings.

Her head crowned with a turban
Royalty ...
Her tongue speaks in languages too intricate to understand.

Ah me! The beauty of a life transformed
Is not to be ignored
No excuses, no bitterness, no resentment, no twisted lies
No legalistic ties that bind.
Only the past rooted in pain
Rises
Into a daybreak of Hope!

Large hands praise palm to palm
Onto her knees she bows
A humbleness like Christ
For like Him she has suffered
Only to rise with more
Beauty and Grace

A Phenomenal Woman
Whose power is supernatural
A gift to be shared
Not about her, but much greater!

A past rooted in shame
A present filled with fame
A future where He knows her name,
Marguerite Ann Johnson.
Once she knew Him...

She was never the same...

Later, as I was reading God's Holy Word,
It was as if she was there with me
But, of course, I cannot tell you everything...
The way she spoke so calmly
How her eyes twinkled
The shouts of jubilee
How her body bowed in humility
As she prayed.
How the cleansing water washed over...

What I can tell you is
It was incredibly sacred in Chapel Hill
That Sabbath morning
Anything but boring
A Phenomenal Woman in church with me!

by Rebecca Burnett

My Correspondence with Jane Austen

by Brooke Gifford

12 May 2016

Dear Miss Austen,

As you are new to the neighborhood, I wanted to express my desire to make you acquainted with the society here. I hope I do not presume too much in soliciting your attendance at a small luncheon at my home Thursday week? I can promise lively reflections, “for what do we live, but to make sport of our neighbors, and laugh at them in our turn?”

*Yours respectfully,
Brooke Gifford*

13 May 2016

Dear Mrs. Gifford,

Allow me to express my joy in an afternoon so well spent. You were a most charming host and might I say, “to have conducted yourself so as to avoid any censure” from me, which really is “a shame for I dearly love to laugh.” I mean you no offense, as I believe we all must “learn to be laughed at”. I was not, however, without subject. Your neighbor, Mr. W. reminds me of a clergyman I know, a Mr. C. He really is an oddity. I was once subjected to an afternoon of recitations from Fordyce’s sermons. You may only imagine how I amused myself. When I think on it, I am grateful for my sister Cassandra, for without her, I might have forgotten myself in behavior very unbecoming a lady. I confess, my mirth and derision were so great, I snickered. I hope we may soon laugh together, and so, might I be so bold as to wait on you tomorrow afternoon?

*Sincerely,
Jane Austen*

13 May 2016

My Dear Miss Austen,

“You deserve a longer letter than this; but it is my unhappy fate seldom to treat people so well as they deserve,” therefore, yes, please come. You do me a great service.

P.S. Mr. W. is an “oddity.” He really does feed his dogs with the fork he is currently using for his own purposes.

*Yours truly,
Brooke*

1 June 2017

Dearest Brooke,

I am pleased to learn that you have found your trip to the lakes every bit as amiable as anticipated. Since writing the last, I confess I am not at all well. C. insists on my seeing Dr. Jones, “therefore do not be alarmed if you hear of his having been to me.” As I know you all too well, I need not remind you that I will not hear of you cutting your stay short on my account. You must experience all the wild has to offer, “for what are men compared to rocks and mountains?”

*Yours,
J*

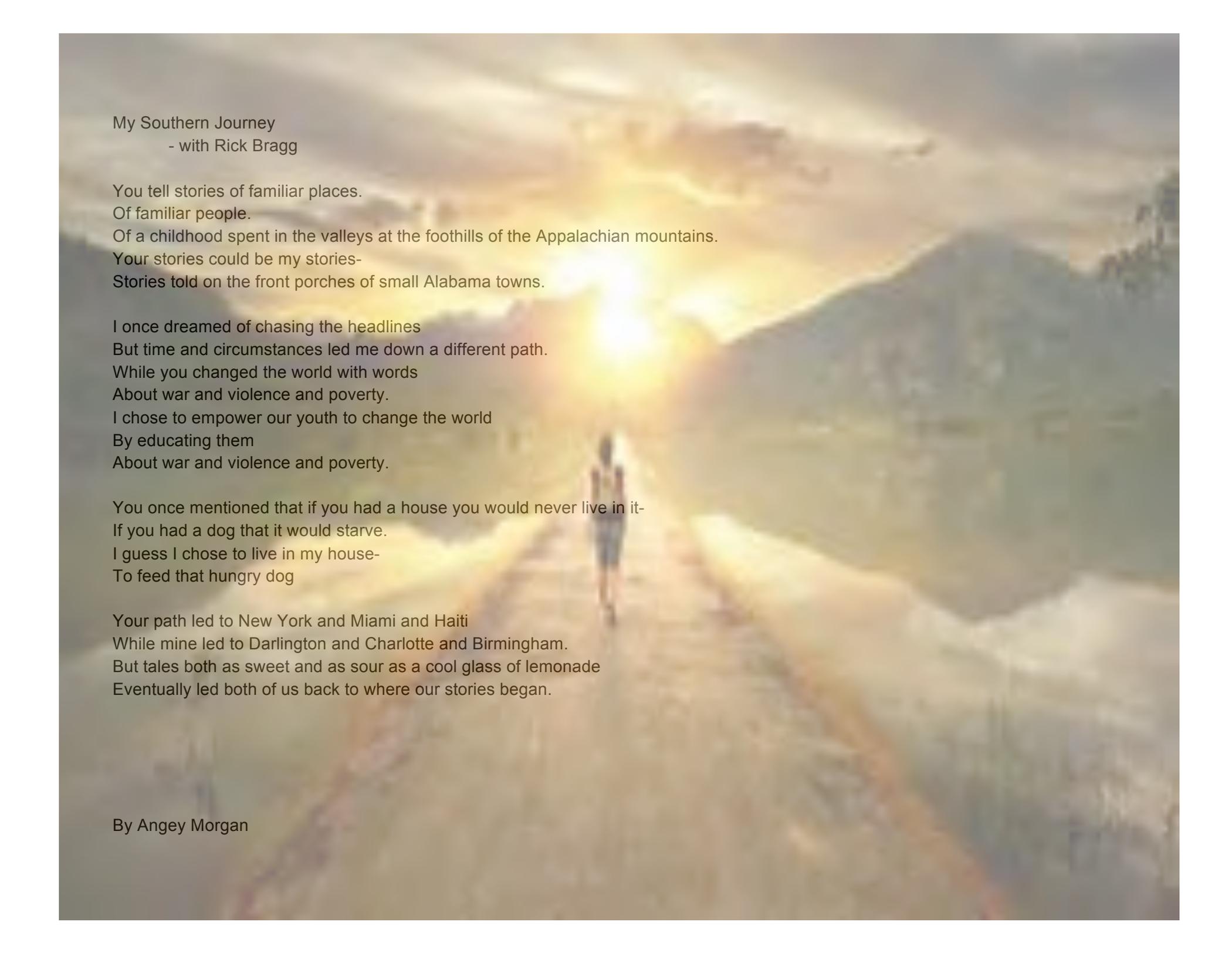
23 June 2017

Dearest Jane,

How I longed to be back with my dear friend after so long an absence, but what I witnessed was shocking. More to the point, I feel really anxious for your health. Our most recent tete-a-tete did not put me at ease. You joke about your "blotchy skin" and not being as handsome as you once were, but I must urge you to send for the doctor again as something must be done to make you more comfortable. You have grown quite thin and pale. Forgive me, but your complexion has lost its brilliancy. Pardon me, it pains me to speak of these things. If you will allow me to give you some relief from your present circumstances, I will retire immediately to your home in order to nurse you back to full health.

Most Sincerely,

B

A person is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that leads towards a bright sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene with warm, golden light. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

My Southern Journey
- with Rick Bragg

You tell stories of familiar places.
Of familiar people.
Of a childhood spent in the valleys at the foothills of the Appalachian mountains.
Your stories could be my stories-
Stories told on the front porches of small Alabama towns.

I once dreamed of chasing the headlines
But time and circumstances led me down a different path.
While you changed the world with words
About war and violence and poverty.
I chose to empower our youth to change the world
By educating them
About war and violence and poverty.

You once mentioned that if you had a house you would never live in it-
If you had a dog that it would starve.
I guess I chose to live in my house-
To feed that hungry dog

Your path led to New York and Miami and Haiti
While mine led to Darlington and Charlotte and Birmingham.
But tales both as sweet and as sour as a cool glass of lemonade
Eventually led both of us back to where our stories began.

By Angey Morgan

Catching Elie Wiesel in Between Classes
by Richard Monast

Walking through the halls of Boston University
I approach, humbled by his presence, yet surprised by his stature
“How can a hero look so
normal?”
I think.
I build up the courage to speak,
“Mr. Wiesel,” I manage somehow.
“I’ve come here to thank you, for all that you’ve done.”
He says, “Walk with me, too much to do, not enough time,”
In a voice that, while small, has an immeasurable depth.
“Your novel” I say “is a testament to remind us to avoid evil and...”
“No,” he says.
“It is a testament to remind us to avoid indifference.”
Indifference to me, is the epitome of evil.“
“Then what must we do?”
“Anything.”
He stops.
“I don’t understand.”
“Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race,
religion,
or political views,
that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe.”
And it strikes me,
To mend fences we must destroy them,
To fight people we must teach them,
To help humanity we must fight injustice.
We must
Do
Something.

Private Investigator’s Findings Narrative:
by Jess Mullen

I was hired to investigate Ms. Dickinson’s movements. While it appears to most that

Walking through lamplight streets with Langston Hughes by Matt Shivers

I was walking through the streets late at night
the bright blue LEDs making the street look like day
As I walked the street darkened
but not too much
and I looked up expecting a broken lamp
Instead
i found a yellow bulb
washing the street in warmer light
The busy sounds of the city fading instead to the
rhythms of

Jazz

I didn't think I'd idealize the past,
i'm more interested in revolution
but I didn't think to complain about one night in Harlem
in the 20's
And as I walked looking for a way to find my bearings
staggering out of a
Club
came a man I had seen in black and white
vividly instead in black and yellow.
He waves me along and I follow in his wake
pushed along, flowing through the streets
floating on air and

Music

my mind races struggling to know what to say
Do I tell him that my America is the answer to his question
the thoughts that drove him to create
the sentiment may not be as much a comfort as he'd
Expect
that the mountain has become a mine
from which his arts have been pulled and polished and boxed for
mass consumption
that the explosion was too loud and too quiet
and his song has found ears but not enough

Hush

As I open my mouth to speak he silences me with a
we stand outside a jazz hall and as I move to go inside
he remains still and closes his eyes
not knowing what to do I mimic him
i feel it before anything else, or maybe I only feel it and my
memory has supplied the sound
the rhythm, the beat, the music, the jazz, the
Sync-

o-

pa-

tion

The unexpected pauses in the sound saying more than the
music itself and as I strained to hear
the music picked up pace and grew louder
faster and closer and I open my eyes to see the blues of the
present and Wu-Tang blasting from a passing car
Billie fades into the distance and Langston is gone
I am left only with
Legacy

Pamela Malpartida
Pre-AP English
MA Insight Education & Bridgewater State University
2016 Summer Institute
Ms. Sandra Effinger

August 4, 2016

Homework Assignment #3 – Undress a Poet, or a Novelist, or a Playwright. Be prepared to share orally and digitally in class.

Across Country Road Trip with Carl Sandburg

Carl Sandburg arrives
in his Model T.

We ride through
“Chicago” and “prairie cornfields”
we sit silently in awe
and then we move on.

High School Dropout
Dishwasher, Layer of Bricks
Ad Writer, and Newspaper Reporter
They tell me you are a poet and “I believe them, for I
have” read your poems, listening
they call me to breathe.

We drive on
Westward on, we fade away.

“Partners in the” dust
Route 66
Amarillo, Albuquerque, Flagstaff
Our journey is slow.

“Talking to each other without words, singing rhythms in silence to each other.”

Carl Sandburg and me
in our Model T.

“The dust of the traveled road
Shall touch our hands and face.”
We sit silently in awe
and then we move on.

Hannah Thompson

Pre-AP English

August 4, 2016

Undressing a Poet

How to Fall in Love Like Edgar Allan Poe

- Ω **First, be sure to have suffered from a childhood filled with death, poverty, and absent/cruel father figures. It helps if you moved around a lot.**
- Ω **Develop deeply intense relationships with older women, to the exclusion of all others. Be sure to choose women with poor constitutions, like your mother.**
- Ω **Fall helplessly in love with these women, for maybe they will care for you the way that your mother never could.**
- Ω **Write her love letters filled with gushing admissions of love (if you are generic enough, you can reuse them for the next woman) and passionate descriptions of her beauty and grace.**
- Ω **Alienate the men in your life by being demanding, belligerent, and stubborn.**
- Ω **Begin the descent into despair when the blood inevitably appears on her lips, and sink deeper into depression as the illness progresses.**
- Ω **When she dies, hide yourself away and write poetry memorializing your love for her. Use repetition and alliteration to torment yourself and extend your heartache.**
- Ω **Wander drunkenly around graveyards, cursing the angels above and passing out on your lover's sepulcher.**
- Ω **Meet a new woman. Repeat.**

Jessica Mullen
8/3/2016 APSI
Undressing A Poet

Private Investigator's Findings Narrative:

I was hired to investigate Ms. Dickinson's movements. While it appears to most that she remained secluded, I was astounded to make my final discovery. Many days passed where I waited for any movements or visitors to the Dickinson family home. Nothing moved, I thought my "life had stood" still for centuries. I even felt myself becoming depressed and in despair. I started contemplating Death. Then- it happened. I noticed a small figure creeping down the path toward-town. I immediately engaged, for "I could not stop for Death."

I followed this small framed silhouette into the basement of the community center. It was there that I discovered an unbelievable thing. I peered through the window as I watched a formal, well-dressed middle aged woman sit while welcoming young girls into the small room. The girls slinked into the room. They did not interact with each other. Eyes down. In the middle of the room was a circle of wooden chairs. Each girl sat quietly and waited. Waited. Waiting for - what? I could not hear what words were spoken in that room, but when the girls left- they held their heads a little higher. Their chest open a little wider. Their walk- a little more deliberate.

As the girls exited, I inquired about the meeting. What did the leader want? One girl with wispy hair framing her face stated that the leader "never..asked a crumb of me." I moved my focus to another set of girls embracing one another. As they parted, I could hear one remind the other to find what "perches in [her] soul." I couldn't lose sight of the woman. As I glanced into the window, I only saw the tail of a long burgundy coat breeze through the doorway. I rushed to confront the leader of this mysterious leader. There I was face to face. "Who are you?"

"I am Nobody I'm Nobody! Who are you? Are you - Nobody - too?" I just couldn't find the words to respond. She continued, "Then there's a pair of us! Don't tell! they'd advertise - you know!" And with that she disappeared into the darkness.

Dumbfounded I walked toward the moonlit path from where I came. In the distance I heard a sweet sound of several voices- "How dreary - to be - Somebody!" as they softly drifted off into the moonlight.

Follow-up:

Over the following months, I conducted surveillance at this location. I saw the same young girls- month after month. Come. And Go. As time passed, fewer girls attended. I never did see that woman with the small frame again.

A Day with Hemingway

Cafe
Citrus, Champagne
Bacon, scones

Alfresco, chill
Chirps, boat motors

Tavern
Laughter, shouting
Bebop, Jazz

Rum, beer
Whisky, wine

Petty theft
Lewd jokes

I'm typically never this productive before noon

Dizzy, sleepy
Happy, exhausted

Hemingway's House
Chlorine, soil
Sea, ammonia

Gulls, gusts
Purrs, soft breaths

by Melissa Evans

My Ride with Springsteen

I let the screen door slam
as I ran down the stairs.
In a fog, I scampered across the dirt and sucked in some air,
His light brown eyes offered something homey
His door opened with little ceremony
he whispered to me now,
“Hop on in here for the ride of your life.”

Well, I got on inside;
We pulled away, headed out to the shore
We passed the switchblade lovers –
so shiny and so lonesome at the core.
He put his arm around me—held me tight—
Thirty-one years older, anxious, but alright

Oh, that sure was all fine with me.

We drove by mansions of glory
With the chipping paint,
Passed Sal's Grocery on South Street--
Which had to close without much complaint
He called me pretty Darling,
and I folded up into his arms.

Well, now I'm no Janie
I don't partake
In late night drunken orgies
Out at the lake on rote 88
But, given the chance to live my life
again, What else could I do?
Except enfold his hand
as we drove out into his holy land
I played the loving woman,
I let him be the faithful man.

We drove by Asbury's boardwalk—
The aurora lit up dancing in the dark—
The marquee
hailed new talent at down at the Stone Pony.
Oh-oh, I could see him now
Knew that he'd have to end his big career somehow
Oh-oh, thunder road, oh thunder road on thunder road
You let us together take a stab at romance
But I knew our drive tonight was just a game of chance
I could smell the green of summer fading from my lover;
I was growin' up.

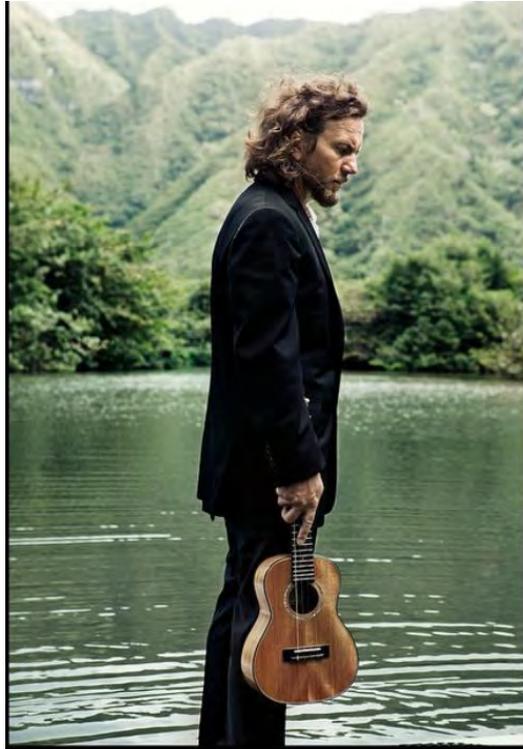
So he got his guitar
And we talked like we'd never part
'bout his dad's illness,

his family's move, his mom's ever-present heart.
We went on this way deep into the night.
I couldn't help it—I was blinded by the light.
And I was just waiting on
Words that he'd not spoken
About how we'd be one
About how we'd never be broken.

But he couldn't give way to all
the fears he'd kept at bay.
Their haunting his bright dreams
and all of the girls that he had to send away.
They scream his name at night when they meet
at his father's house in the pines at the end of the street.

And in the lonely cool before dawn,
I hear his engine roaring on
But when I wake from my dream he's gone
On the wind, Bruce didn't let me win
It's a town full of losers
And I'm just another one of them.

Bethany Whinnem



SITTING ON THE PORCH WITH EDDIE VEDDER

I saw you in the distance as you sat on your dimly lit PORCH;
The lights forming a sheer halo which enveloped your being.
As I slowly, aimlessly ambled closer, I heard your soft, smooth voice
Asking me to sit for a while and JUST BREATHE.

“Just sit,” you said, “and RELEASE it all.”

You handed me a glass of chilled, red wine. We didn’t speak;
Words would have violated the sacredness of the moment.
Then you picked up your ukulele and gently played.

The warm, mellow sounds were smooth and silky,
Causing the ice surrounding my soul to melt.
I was mesmerized for minutes, hours, days?
Time as elusive as the STATE OF LOVE AND TRUST I had once known.

Your healing voice brought me out of my hypnotic trance,
Your words directing me back to my long-forgotten reality.
Your simple affirmation gave me hope again...

“I KNOW I WAS BORN AND I KNOW THAT I’LL DIE.
THE IN-BETWEEN IS MINE.
I AM MINE.”

by Lisa Naquin

Dear Edith,

Thank you for your words
Your haunting descriptions that perfectly capture
A stark New England winter
A love that will never be
A tragic accident
A quick, biting remark that leaves the reader stunned
Your clever knitting of words
Into meaningful, thought-provoking lessons

I wonder how much of your inspiration
Is from your own difficult life
Did you have a red pickle dish
That was unceremoniously shattered
By someone you once loved?
In an unhappy, unfulfilling marriage
You took refuge in the solid ground
Of homes and gardens
Creating beautiful places
Fulfilling yourself in other ways

Many years ago, in an age of innocence,
I imagined my life like a fairy tale
With a happy ending befitting of a Jane Austen heroine
Or a Disney princess
Little did I know
Your words were preparing me

And here I am
With tragedy and unexpected death in my past
A widow who never got married
Alone but not alone
My son the best part of his departed father
Instead of wallowing in my grief
I hold my head high

Your words remind me
And oddly bring comfort
I am the protagonist of my life
I am Ethan
Strong and committed and incredibly stubborn
And sometimes I am Mattie before
Optimistic, loving, seeing the good in everything
And sometimes I am Mattie after
Angry, bitter, confused—
But only for a moment

Rarely I am Grace or Alida,
Holding a grudge and an ace in my pocket
Never will I be Lily
But I am also Countess Ellen
Determined, unyielding, and confident

I imagine what you'd be today
A nasty woman for sure
A leader of the resistance
A passionate fighter for equality
A loyal follower of Dr. Ruth

In your own way
You began a resistance in the literary world
Challenging social norms
Questioning old traditions

You were a trail blazing badass
Lighting the darkness and inspiring generations
Thank you Edith
Thank you for words

Sincerely,
Anna Sabella

I am enclosing a picture of "my Ryan" with his beloved puppy, Buddy.



An Acting Lesson From Shakespeare - Cristina Smarra

Alone, I am looking out into the yellow twinkling gem

Directions being dictated from off stage

“Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.”

I turn sharply to the wing. Bill: are you serious?

Knowing I have trusted a trickster with words like a bird waiting for food in its cage

I put aside all of my doubts and let the my diction flow almost imperious

Do I dare tell him I only remembered almost two-thirds?

His lyrics sing within me; and the the dove is released

Although I'm not perfect, his words of a fool encompass my spirit

“Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit”

Dearest Bard: thanks for clarifying it!

Dining with Tom Waits, Sunday Morning at 2:45am

By Reade S. Whinnem

Just outside the fogged window next to our table, a round-faced man looks up into the night sky. He smiles, the edges of his mouth curling so high that his eyes squint impishly. He pulls his collar tight around his neck before raising his hand to hail a cab.

"Tom," I ask, "is that Louis Armstrong?"

Tom doesn't look up from the laminated menu. "Mmmm?" he growls, raising an eyebrow.

"I said, 'Is that Louis Armstrong?'"

Tom lifts his head and looks around the diner. "Where?" he asks.

"Out there. On the corner."

Tom wipes the dampness from the window with his forearm, but the back door of the cab closes and the wheels jerk away from the curb.

Tom rubs his chin and looks at me thoughtfully. "You know, Bobo, it could have been him," he nods. "But technically, if we're basing things on my limited observations of a yellow cab and flashing neon, it could have been anyone. Louis Armstrong or Anthony Quinn. Even Chuck E. Weiss." He returns to his menu, then after a moment laughs, adding, "Or Lupe Velez."

I stir my coffee. To call it coffee is being generous. It is so thin I can see the letters stamped on the bottom inside the cup. **CARE FOR A REFILL?** it asks boldly, then below, in red script, *Grapefruit Moon Diner.*

"Do I want a second supper or a first breakfast?" Tom asks himself out loud. He checks his wrist, but finding no watch there, gains no useful information.

"I'm getting supper," I tell him.

He flips the menu over a few times, sighs heavily, and strums his lower lip. "Oh, for crying out loud!" he suddenly blurts. He points to a line on my own syrup-sticky menu. "You see this, Bobo?" He jabs at an item about two thirds of the way from the top. "They serve *skinless* chicken here. Can you imagine how painful it was for that poor chicken growing up?" Tom clucks his tongue loudly in disapproval. "Christ!" he barks, "they've got *boneless* ones as well! Can you imagine the unmanageable life a boneless chicken would lead? I oughta complain to the manager!"

Three men at a nearby table look up. I recognize Mickle Mantel among them. The other two, one fat and another with scarred, dark eyes, are strange to me. Dark Eyes sees Tom and quickly looks down at his veal cutlet.

"See that guy?" Tom asks. "That's Marciano. Rocky Marciano." Tom takes a sip of coffee. "I kicked his ass once." Sensing my disbelief, he adds, "It's true, go ask him! Just know that he won't wanna talk about all that at all, no he won't."

"Who's the heavy guy?" I ask.

Tom shakes his head. "Are you kidding me? You mean to tell me that you don't recognize The Great One?"

I am about to ask who The Great One is when our booth's jukebox speaker begins to crackle with sharp static. "Uh oh, here's the waitress," Tom says.

The static crackle grows so loud and quick that I can barely hear her when she walks up to our booth, cocks a hip, and says, "What'll ya 'av?"

I look at Tom, but he waves at me. "You go first, Bobo. I'm still deciding."

I look up at her rhinestone glasses and thick pink lipstick. "Meatloaf with mashed potatoes and gravy, please."

She raises an eyebrow as if to critique my choice, but scribbles it into her pad anyway. Tom puckers his lips. "I'll...let's see...you know...put me down for...uh..." his voice trails off. Finally he slaps his hand down on the menu. "I'll have that boneless chicken breast!" he concedes, then quickly adds, "but you tell that chef back there to treat that chicken right, you hear me?"

Rhinestones scribbles, snaps her gum, uncocks her hip, and walks away.

I reach out to take a sip of coffee, but there's an eyeball floating in the bottom of it. It bobs there, an oblong chunk of Jell-O, the pupil searching left and right. "Damn!" I shout, dropping the cup back down.

"Whatsa matter?" Tom asks, then looks in the cup. "Oh, don't worry, that's just The Kid. He won't hurt you."

"How'd he get in there?" I ask.

"Who knows how The Kid does anything? The Kid's just an eyeball!" Tom looks down into my cup again. The Kid jiggles at him appreciatively. "Don't you worry about The Kid," Tom says. "He's the least objectionable person in this whole place, including you and me." Tom

looks around the diner, briefly making eye contact with Rocky Marciano. Tom makes a fist and winks as he tosses a good natured jab in Marciano's direction. Marciano nods shyly and goes back to poking his veal cutlet with his fork.

Tom starts picking at a cigarette stain on the Formica table. "So how you been, Bobo? Anything new?" From the coffee cup, The Kid shifts his singular gaze back at me. He, too, is interested.

I search my mind, but I can't think of anything that would interest a great poet and raconteur. My wife and I have recently fixed the backyard fence, and we had the wiring in the house redone. Those were too mundane, but I did have something else, something that, while still prosaic, was at least scatological. "Well..." I say, "we potty trained our daughter."

Tom scowls. "So what? I'm potty trained. Everyone in this place is potty trained, mostly. Even The Kid is potty trained and he's just an eyeball!"

"But my daughter's only two years old," I reply, a little annoyed.

"It took her two years to learn to use the bathroom?" Tom stops picking the burnt Formica and slides his palm across the greasy surface of the table, testing its smoothness. "Sounds like an awkward and messy two years." He raps the tap twice. "You know, I had a cat once that didn't eat or drink for two years. She got along just fine, not a care in the world."

"What made her change her mind after two years?" I ask.

"She died!" he says. "You can only go so long without nourishment."

At that moment Rhinestone returns and clonks two plates down on the table. A gob of gravy splatters toward The Kid, who eyes it hungrily. I would offer him some meatloaf, but he has no mouth.

"Tasty!" Tom says, slapping Rhinestone on her hip. "Thanks, honey! I'm hungry as a bulldog!"

After eating, Tom and I step out into the cold. Across the street, a young boy in a wheelchair struggles, his mittened hands slipping on the grips of his wheels. Tom takes a pack of Lucky Strikes from his shirt pocket, taps them, pulls one out, and sticks it behind his ear. He

returns the cigarettes to his shirt and removes a half pint of Wild Turkey from his jacket. He takes a swig and offers me some.

I take it and sip lightly. The boy in the wheelchair reaches the edge of the sidewalk, stopping before the drop off of the curb. I think absently that Tom and I should go across the street and help him, but the words get tangled on their way to my tongue, flickering down and getting lost somewhere between my shoulder blades. Large, slow snowflakes begin to fall.

Tom says, “Weeeeeell, Bobo, I think I’m gonna find me a lamppost to stand under and howl til the night starts to fade away. Wanna join me?”

“Sorry. I have to get home. My baby's waiting up for me.”

Tom laughs, his voice a dusty 78 record. “It's 3:30 in the am, Bobo. Your wife's been asleep for seven hours.”

The boy in the wheelchair eyes the curb suspiciously, shaking his head. He rubs his mittens together for warmth.

“She said she’d wait up,” I say. “She had a Real Simple magazine to read.”

Tom puts his arm around me. “Aww, ain’t that sweet?” He takes the whiskey and pulls another swig. “Come on, Bobo, let’s go out howlin’.”

“It’s colder than a well-digger’s ass out here, Tom,” I say.

Across the street, the boy in the wheelchair suddenly sprouts majestic black wings. The spokes of his wheelchair ping away from the frame. The boy takes flight, and the wheelchair falls to pieces on the sidewalk.

Tom watches the boy fly off and smiles. “Cold? Yes...yes it is,” he says.

“Okay,” I say. “Maybe just one lamppost.”

Lyrics referenced: “Grapefruit Moon,” “Nighthawks at the Diner,” “I Can't Wait to Get Off Work,” “Eyeball Kid”, “Jitterbug Boy,” “Goin' Down Slow,” “When You Ain't Got Nobody,” “Diamonds on my Windshield,” “The Piano Has Been Drinking” “Black Wings”

Portions of conversation adapted from interview with Tom Waits, "The Music of Chance," Spin magazine, June 1994

“Undressing” screenwriter/playwright Aaron Sorkin

INT. – SCHOOL CLASSROOM

STUDENTS slowly file out of the class. AARON SORKIN stands from his chair in the back of the classroom and walks to the front desk to shake hands with the teacher, MR. ANDREW JOHNSON, who is packing up his materials to leave for his free period. In MR. SORKIN’S briefcase are both outlines and intricate notes for a HBO MINI-SERIES he is writing based on a dysfunctional charter school in JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, tentatively titled A for Effort (theme song: “Teacher, Teacher” by 38 Special).

AARON: I’m not going to pretend that I understand pedagogies on the first day, but I do have one question: how do you know the students are actually learning?

ANDREW: Good question. Let’s walk, Aaron.

ANDREW flicks off the light switch and guides AARON out the door into the hallway on the way to the TEACHER’S LOUNGE at a brisk pace.

ANDREW: You saw the closure activity. Have you ever heard of an exit ticket?

AARON (chuckling): Apparently not.

ANDREW: But you do know business conferences. Political think tanks. News briefings. How do you know if anyone learns anything once the meeting is over and everyone goes back to the solemnity of their cubicles?

AARON: You don’t. You just trust that everyone was listening and that everyone will remember and understand what you say.

ANDREW: You can’t do that when you’re a teacher. Well, sometimes you can, but then sometimes you can’t. It becomes intuitive until it doesn’t. Then you have to change based on the process and product. Teachers are like intellectual chameleons.

AARON (taking notes): Right.

The school secretary passes the two in the hallway and hands ANDREW a piece of paper before scuttling off.

ANDREW (quickly): Thanks, Debbie.

AARON: And so but then exit tickets are like what? Homework?

ANDREW (skimming the secretary’s paper): Shit.

AARON: What's that about?

ANDREW: There's an assembly on The Dangers of Malaria and Other Mosquito-Borne Illnesses tomorrow. Originally, it was only a short PowerPoint presentation for the biology students going to Costa Rica for a field trip, but now the principal thinks it's a good message for everyone, including teachers.

ANDREW takes out his phone and sends a few texts in rapid succession.

ANDREW (holding up paper): In other words, this really screws my plans for tomorrow.

AARON: That's –

ANDREW: Exit tickets are like daily post-assessments that may or may not be assessed depending on the day and/or depending on your philosophy. On some level it's more for you than the students. You can see what they understand and, occasionally, why and how. You use it to further inform your instruction in the coming days and weeks amongst other things.

AARON and ANDREW turn into the stairwell where they begin to descend to the first floor of the building. A colorful bulletin board that displays a vague, abstract version of the school's mission statement adorns the wall.

AARON: How do you know if they just don't quite understand the lesson at all?

ANDREW (right eyebrow raised): How did you know that viewers weren't quite understanding Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip?

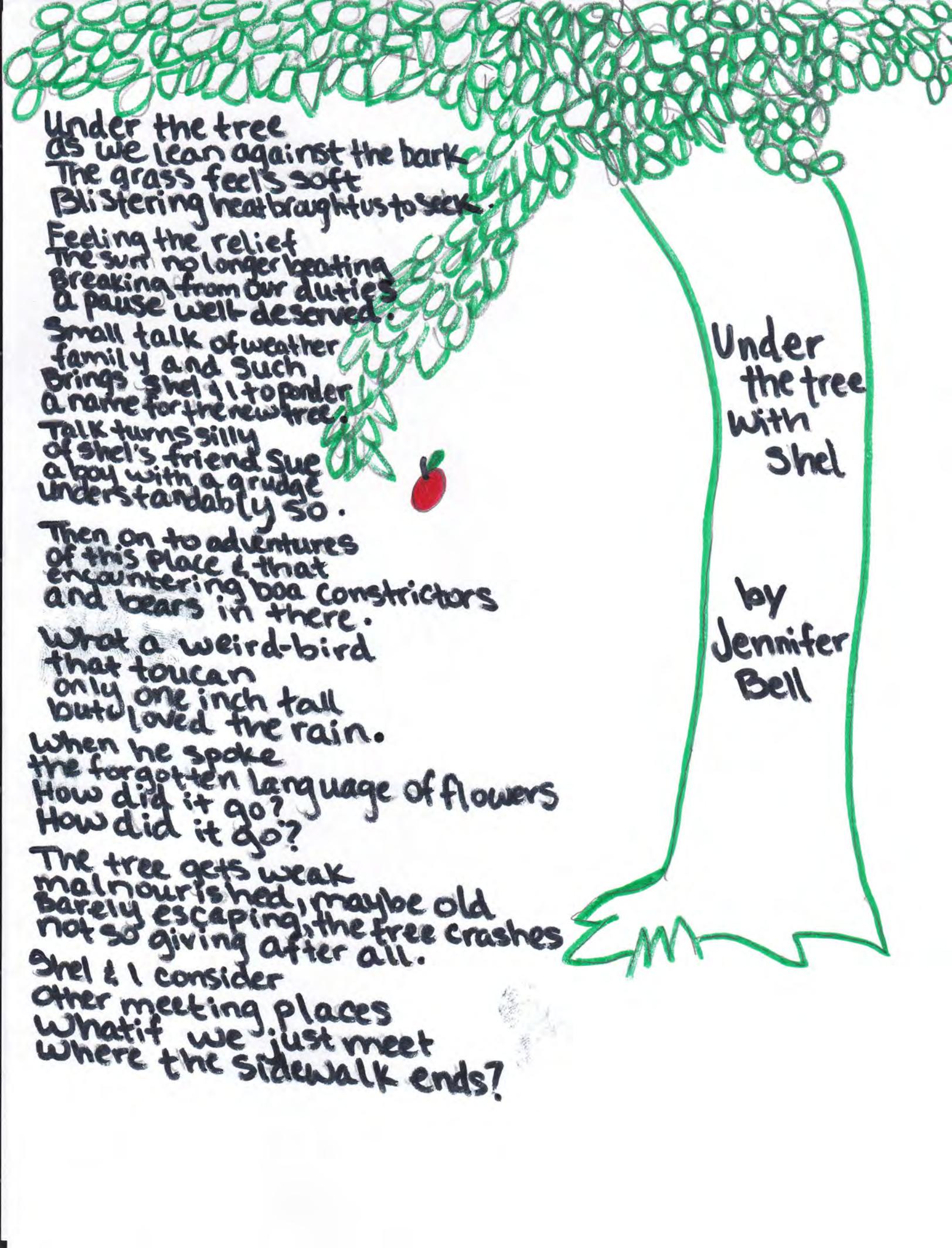
AARON (folding his arms): Ratings were low. The numbers we were looking for just weren't there.

ANDREW: If you're teaching math, the numbers you're looking for won't be there. If you're teaching music, the notes you're looking for won't be there. And...

The two stop at the base of the stairwell and turn to face each other.

AARON (gesturing): And...

ANDREW: If you're teaching English, the words you're looking for won't be there.



Under the tree
as we lean against the bark
The grass feels soft
Blistering heat brought us to seek.

Feeling the relief
The sun no longer beating
Breaking from our duties
A pause well deserved.

Small talk of weather
family and such
Brings Shel & I to ponder
A name for the new tree.

Talk turns silly
of Shel's friend Sue
a boy with a grudge
understandably so.

Then on to adventures
of this place & that
encountering boa constrictors
and bears in there.

What a weird-bird
that toucan
only one inch tall
but loved the rain.

When he spoke
the forgotten language of flowers
How did it go?
How did it go?

The tree gets weak
malnourished, maybe old
barely escaping, the tree crashes
not so giving after all.

Shel & I consider
other meeting places
What if we just meet
where the sidewalk ends?

Under
the tree
with
Shel

by
Jennifer
Bell

teaching grammar to e.e. cummings(trying
by Kathleen Bossenbroek

teaching grammar to e.e. cummings (trying,
hopelessly,unsuccessfully) as he rambles on
lowell picasso pound and stein

Please

Sit. Now have you tried
capitalizing?

like children im apt to forget
to remember(more seldom than a wave is wet)
he says slowly and s i g h s

Moving on to punctuation then?

Pe(ai)riodsa(din)ndcommas understanding
he writes uncooperatively and says
i move a perhaps fraction of space here inch there

If I bring up spelling,

he clarifies r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r was to make people stare
arranging and changing placing carefully
im an imagist (are you a Cambridge lady)

i smile and concede (youre right its sane and sunly)

he returns to painting the balloonman
and looks back volunteers that he carries around the
war love spring (he carries them in his heart)

Nine Times to Die with Sylvia Plath

(A found poem)

You do not do, you do not do --
Then the substanceless blue.

Ash, ash -- you poke and stir.
I am a nun now, I have never been so pure,

Jumpy as a Mexican jumping bean -
The only thing to come now is the sea.

And like a cat, I have nine times to die --
I am inhabited by a cry.

Blackberries as big as the ball of my thumb...
They weld to me like plums

A clean slate with your own face on
You are the baby in the barn.

The tulips are too red in the first place.
What is this, this face -
So murderous in its strangle of branches?

Marble heavy, a bag full of God -
Like an eye between two white lids that will not shut.

You do not do, you do not do --
Then the substanceless blue.

by Betsy Brack

"Lady Lazarus"
"Daddy"
"You're"
"Nick and the Candlestick"
"Tulips"
"Blackberrying"

Poetic Intimacy

by Steve Clark

Taylor Mali,
Like Salvador Dali, whose Persistence of Memory melts across the page,
Your words drip across the stage,
penetrating the soul and piercing the heart.

A chance encounter placed us behind The Green Door.
You slamming words off the stage,
I contemplating the future:

Would I be one of twenty,
Or hopelessly persist to be
One of the fifty.

No “Birkenstocks,” no “cappuccino,” but
I did have “conviction for language”
And a recognition that I did make “what teachers make.”

My “incongruous images” found clarity in teaching
the most “aggressively inarticulate generation to come along since a long
time ago.”

The green door has faded to a twenty-year-old memory, but we have
persisted:

You espousing pedagogical virtues,
I teach. I teach. I TEACH!

“I am a [teacher]; eat my verbal dust.”

To Sylvia Plath

by Anna Damiani

Among the narcissi, where we reflect on what has become of us
Life must end in death, no illusions between the lines of the beginning and an end, but
Were the sixties only “flower bandages” over freedom and feminism?
When you looked as Cinderella, mirror’d on the wall, were you, Sylvia
Fair to those of us, women married, divorced in post-war wonder,
Could we have it all?
Appearances to cross Chanel and not the channel of the English language
Your hands had been covered in lace cuffs but not having to be mumm’d
Many of us remain silent, dressed in pearls and sipping floral teas while man ordained
What would become of us – regardless of degree or pedigree.
Barren women, measured by the uterus rulers - we did not create Apollo nor a Jupiter,
but remained vacant eyed Diana’s and vengeful Heras;
Hunting words and spearing emotions to cover up the losses or the pain
Which burned more? I’ve always wanted to know, being a mother, or having more girls,
A divorcee poet-ess, or the move across the English language into realization
That the aftermath of burning our memories and homes would lead to being Alice in Wonderland,
“What keyhole have we slipped through?” What looking glass does not reflect the pain?
“What door has shut?” When, if ever did the glass ceiling get removed?
When you created, “this ...dark house, very big. I made it myself, Cell by cell from a quiet corner”
You left us gaping into grey... nothingness, tombstones labeling, “here is an end to the writing”
You still became immortal.

Dinner with Dorothy
(complete with terrible illustration)
by Emmie Thomas

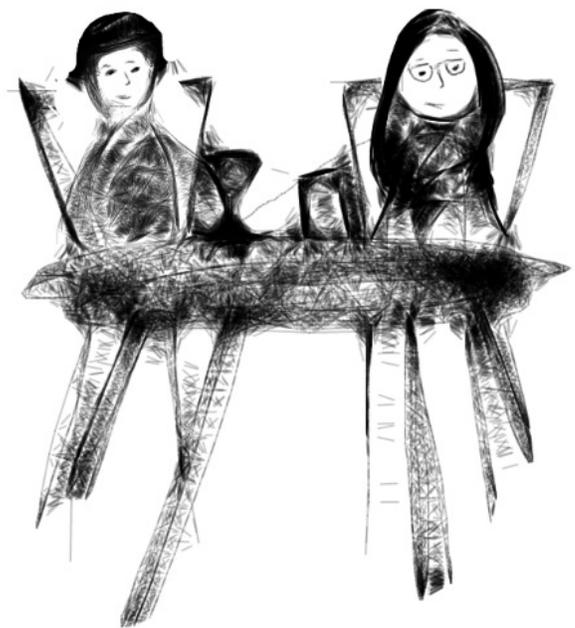
We sit in the back,
Have a drink and discuss.
If you've got nothing nice to say
Come and sit with us.

Though love is a scam
With which she won't bother
And her last man was...
Well...I won't go any farther...

And though society scoffs
At her choices in life,
And sometimes she wishes
She just had a knife...

She's my sharp-tongued companion
And we're here anyway
We ought to have dinner
Or debate old clichés.

Because life may be hard
And may sting like a shiv
But consider your options...
You might as well live.



(a.k.a. Emmie Drueckhamme)

In the Garden with Faye Kilday
By Shellie Dunn

*We walked.
We shared stories about our fathers;
We knew they were watching
As angels in the trees.
We talked about "A Creation Of Our Love"
And how I was a "Creation"
She reminded me,
"For God's given each of us a
Special part to play...
To follow my heart and I
Would not be lead astray!*



The Mooring of Herman Melville

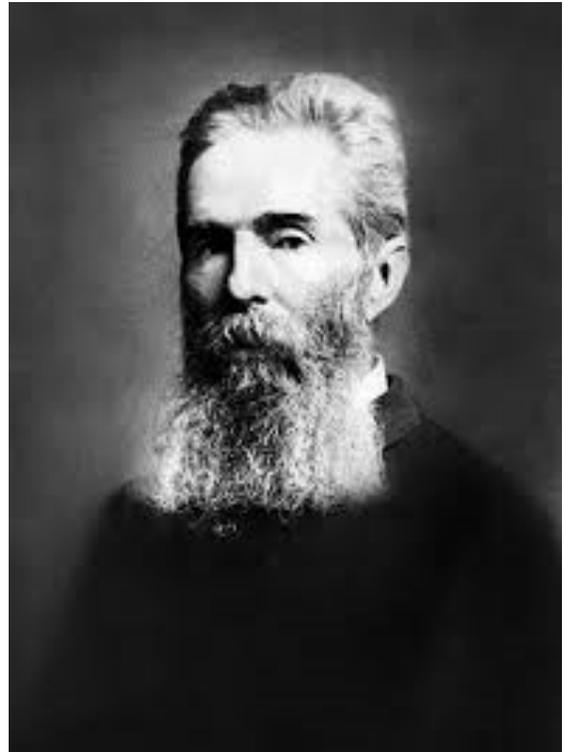
by Scott Evans

Wrapped in a brass-buttoned woolen greatcoat
cut in imitation of a naval officer's uniform,
beard billowing down his chest
like sea-foam frothing from the outspread flukes of
some death-pale leviathan,
Deputy Inspector No. 75 of the United States Custom
Service,
once a sailor on the seas of Fate
and despite charting a course toward oblivion,
found himself moored ashore in mid-life.

At sunrise he rode a horse-drawn cab down
Broadway,
below windows filled with solicitors and scribes,
through streets thronged by tattooed savages and
lightning-rod salesmen
(alas, no bare-breasted, brown-skinned Marquesan
maidens to caress his body among civilized crowds;
these blanched, whalebone-bound New York
debutantes dispatched only glacial glares in passing).
At West Street he paid the driver and debarked on
foot.

Walking to work along piers lining the Hudson,
lamenting the palm-fringed latitudes of his lost
literary fame,
alone, crewless, pondering the rigged crosses of
ships' masts rising like Calvary
from the pallid morning mists, he entered at last
the dockside shack that he shared with other
baggage inspectors,
all of whom vouched full confidence in the man.

Four dollars a day, six days a week, for the better
part of twenty years,
he prepared and filed his paperwork,
his task to confirm the accuracy of cargo lists
from newly-arrived vessels though he himself
remained
anchored to his desk while somewhere,
somewhere deep in the fathomless depths
of the heaving Pacific of his soul,
penetrating the Prime Meridian of his mind,
bristling with galvanized harpoons,
crisscrossed with broken cables,
its scarred brow forever breaching, breaching,
breaching
through cold black currents
of time and space, ocean and existence,
the White Whale swam...



Diving into the Storm with Adrienne Rich

Having read the book of myths,
I go down
to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.

This is the place-
A man trying to think,
the old consolations get him at last,
breathing
raw, agonizing
Give him room!

This is the place-
She was back in love again.
The mermaid, whose dark hair streams black,
still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by,
moves inward toward a silent core of waiting.
More!

they are like us what we were
(if you remember?)
hardly knowing what to ask

secret currents
out of tune
wanting

These are the things we have learned.
We- who live in troubled regions.

by Amy Garza

Museum Field Trip: Poetry Writing Assignment
Kari Haile, Keller High School



The Fall of the Cowboy, 1895 by Frederic Remington
Permanent Collection, Amon Carter Museum of Modern Art
Fort Worth, Texas



The Bridge of Europe, 1877 by Gustave Caillebotte
Permanent Collection, Kimball Museum
Fort Worth, Texas

Museum Field Trip: Poetry Writing Assignment

Kari Haile, Keller High School

The Fall of the Cowboy and *The Bridge of Europe* were painted on different continents, under different circumstances by distinctly different artists; however, both paintings depict the effect of the Industrial Revolution on a way of life the artists revered. Remington's life work was to capture the American cowboy and his vanishing way of life. Caillebotte was a daring French painter who ventured away from the norm of historical depictions and chose to capture "modern" France.

Both painters present the somberness associated with the end of an era. The coming of manufactured barbed wire marked the end of America's open range, and according to Remington, the end of the cowboy way of life. In Europe, the Industrial Revolution shifted focus from creating architectural masterpieces to mass-produced work of steel. The barbed wire and steel beams represent the restriction of creativity and freedom. The artists use color, placement, and light to signal the end of the era and the effect of that end on the people on both continents.

I have loved these paintings for years and am fascinated by their similarities of tone and treatment of people while having contrasting settings. The somberness even in the gray horse's posture is poignant.

Closing the Gate

by Kari Haile

At the end of the day,
We close the gate
On the life we have known
And are left to contemplate
What will have grown in this wild place
When we return.

Distracting Yeats from His Work

by Emily Hall

look for moon references and spirituality

He sat there in the little room.
That was all, though.

From afar he was a dusty photograph,
his spectacles floating over his long, long nose.
The picture of respectability.
I drew closer, and invisible elements
seemed to gravitate
toward him.
Creating a filter, a barrier.
I could sense their charge.

Curious, I reached out my hand.
That peculiarly ruffled hair, I thought,
And I touched it with my fingers.
Through his shade now, my hand couldn't stop.
Soft, fleeting, urgent.
Not a word.

Breathing in unison.

Slowly, his eyes shifted to a realm beyond my shoulder.
The moon watched on.

Dreaming with Langston Hughes

By Teresa Harden

I bring to you all my dreams and heart melodies

 Please protect them from the too rough fingers of the world

Hold fast to them so they will not perish

 But be lifted up by the bird that can soar.

I want to spread my arms wide

 And find my place in the sun

I want to dance with joy

 And rest at the end of the day.

Help me understand

 To serve is to let hate die still born

 To love is to break through the chains that bind

 To learn is to find the simple truths of the heart

Do not let me dreams get lost as I grow older

 Do not let the light fade

Help me shatter the darkness and smash the night

And bring my precious dreams into

 a thousand dazzling lights of the sun.



Brittany Harper

Running Through the Woods with Robert Frost

An early morning run, on a cold winter's day.
Seeing your breath with each step.
Watching the light flicker across the snow covered hills.
Arriving at the woods, lovely, dark and deep.
At the entrance are two roads, diverged,
One with leaves no step had trodden,
The other, well worn by runners past
And I took the one less traveled by,
Running with joy on the Demon's trail.
But he will not see me stopping here,
For I have miles to go before I sleep,
And many promises to keep.

By Brittany Harper

“Visits to Elizabeth”

by Shannon Haugstad

This is the house of Bishop

This is the fish
That swam near the house of Bishop

This is her hook
Puncturing the fish
That was caught in the house of Bishop

This is the line
Threading the hook
That held fast the fish
That waited in the house of Bishop

This is the fisher, a woman to dread
That wielded the line, all weighted with lead
That hung from the hook
That punctured the fish
That sojourned in the house of bishop

This is one art, easy to master
Discovered by the fisher, avoiding disaster
That removed the lines, further, faster
That dangled from five hooks
That honored the fish
That was freed from the house of Bishop

This is the loss, of family and home
Expressed as an art, by a woman alone
That fished in the river, but left on her own
Dangling the lines
That carried no hooks
That captured no fish
That (I shan't have lied) remains in the house of Bishop



Window Shopping with Christina Rossetti

by Jeremy Horstman

Morning and evening
We're drawn to Rodeo Dr.
"Come by, come by.
Look around when you arrive.
Pants and skirt
Shoes and hats
Dresses and polos
Berets and ties.
Come buy, come buy."

Evening and evening
Among the storefront glass,
With clasping arms and gazing eyes,
With burning wallets and subtle cries,
The two crouch close together.
"Keep close," Jeremy said.
"We must not look at window ads,
We must not buy their suits:
Who knows how much they will cost.
We're better off with fruits."

The ads repeat their shrill cry,
"Come by, come buy."

But intrigued Christina spoke in haste:
"Good clerk, I have no coin or debit."
"No fear, no worries," exclaimed the clerk,
"You can apply for instant credit."

Jeremy met her at the door
Full of wise forewarnings:
"My dear, you should stay no more,
Shopping is not good for teachers;
Should not loiter near the glass
Nor should you buy from such an ass.
Do you not remember Lizzie,
How she met them near the streetlight,
Took their pants and skirts and hats,
Shoes and dresses, too?
They've done it once to Lizzie and Laura,
They'll surely do it to you."

Christina and Jeremy walked away;
Only one of them looking back.
They are safe for now;
No bags in hand.
No purchases that day.

One day Christina could wait no more;
Be it for better or worse;
With keys in hand, she left her house
With credit inside her purse.

Laughed every clerk
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her beaming
Their saliva seeping.
Once again, the familiar cry,
“Come by, come buy.”

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the clerks cuff'd and caught her,
Coax'd and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Christina uttered a few words,
“You say ‘come by, come buy’
So finally here am I.”

The fruits of the windows
Proved to be too much.
“Come by, Come buy”
Cried this or that guy.
Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, Jeremy and Christina spoke.
She had fallen for their trap,
Now surprise, surprise she's broke.

Some council by Jeremy given,
She labeled storefronts forbidden;
“Come by, come buy,”
Every clerks beckons,
Yet Christina passes them by.

The Harlem Shake with Langston Hughes

by Cassi Johnson

You're here in my mind,
At this college on the hill above Harlem,
As I chase my dreams
Just like you envisioned.

I want to be in your shoes,
Or at least walking beside you,
As I walk these *steps form the hill*
That lead down into Harlem.

I close my eyes
And try to step as you would;
I guess I'm what I feel and see and hear, Harlem,
Just as you felt and saw and heard Harlem.

Suddenly, you're here with me.
I hear the thump, thump, thump of your foot on the floor
As you do a lazy sway...
Do a lazy sway...
To the tune o' the weary blues.

I do my best to keep up—
You and I, here as one.
We move to the left.
We move to the right—
Shake our head,
Snap our fingers,
Tap our feet
To the sound of Harlem.

I get lost in your rhythm,
With that dream in my head,
That we will all move like this—
One motion, one rhythm, one beat.

Education with Effie

by Laura Langford

I'm still fairly young
She's older and full of knowledge.
I read a story about her and dogs that stung
But I dissected a cat back in college.

She carries a confidence that maybe once wasn't there.
I use to struggle with that too.
But an encounter overseas made her start to care,
And my family helped my life start anew.

She's inspired by students, by poems, by books.
She says in the spectrum the color gray lies.
I value fine wine, my husband, good cooks.
I'm captivated by blue and hazel when I look in my little boy's eyes.

I really only became a teacher by chance
Sometimes that makes me feel I don't belong.
But she said with other careers she had to dance,
I guess we all have to follow our life's own song.

I imagine she's the type of person who says what she wants
And her audience knows she's just playing.
I'm the type whose fear of hurting someone haunts,
But she smiles and says, "I'm just saying."

I start this year with a new outlook, new baby, new class,
And it's inevitable every year that tension mounts.
I don't know if I did this assignment exactly right to pass,
But I remember she said, "Doneness Counts"!!

Walking my dog with Robert Frost

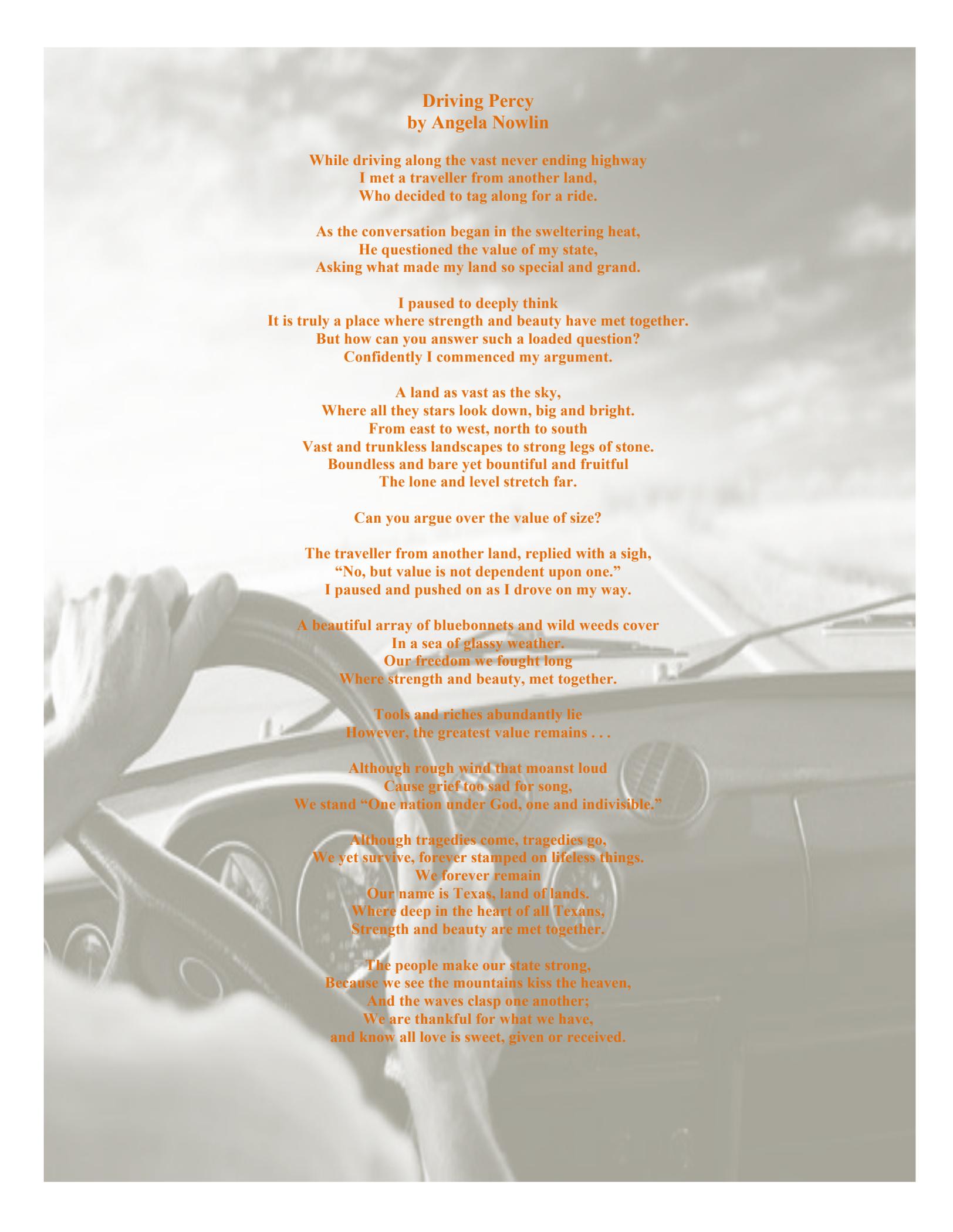
by Kate Mayo

We are in Texas, though I'm not sure why.
I'd rather visit him in the northeast or San Francisco, better yet.
As we walk through the woods, the time does not fly;
The yellow sun hangs low in the sky.
It must be just before sunset.

We talk of fire and ice,
Of walls, birches, and leaves.
He's nothing if not concise.
His words would frustrate thieves.

I have had too much of apple-picking, he says.

My dog notices that our stride has slowed
And turns his nose to lead us home.



Driving Percy
by Angela Nowlin

While driving along the vast never ending highway
I met a traveller from another land,
Who decided to tag along for a ride.

As the conversation began in the sweltering heat,
He questioned the value of my state,
Asking what made my land so special and grand.

I paused to deeply think
It is truly a place where strength and beauty have met together.
But how can you answer such a loaded question?
Confidently I commenced my argument.

A land as vast as the sky,
Where all they stars look down, big and bright.
From east to west, north to south
Vast and trunkless landscapes to strong legs of stone.
Boundless and bare yet bountiful and fruitful
The lone and level stretch far.

Can you argue over the value of size?

The traveller from another land, replied with a sigh,
“No, but value is not dependent upon one.”
I paused and pushed on as I drove on my way.

A beautiful array of bluebonnets and wild weeds cover
In a sea of glassy weather.
Our freedom we fought long
Where strength and beauty, met together.

Tools and riches abundantly lie
However, the greatest value remains . . .

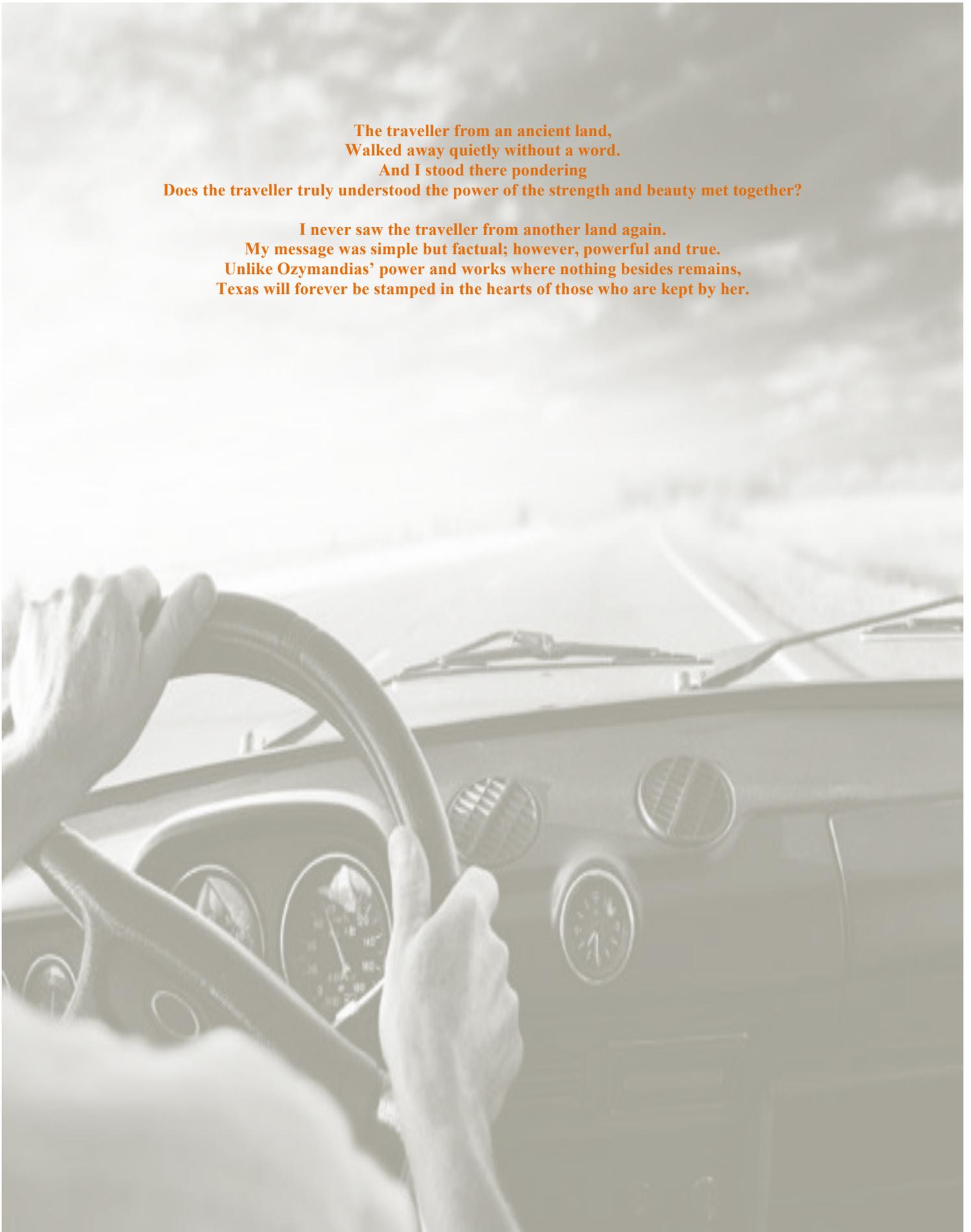
Although rough wind that moanst loud
Cause grief too sad for song,
We stand “One nation under God, one and indivisible.”

Although tragedies come, tragedies go,
We yet survive, forever stamped on lifeless things.
We forever remain
Our name is Texas, land of lands.
Where deep in the heart of all Texans,
Strength and beauty are met together.

The people make our state strong,
Because we see the mountains kiss the heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
We are thankful for what we have,
and know all love is sweet, given or received.

The traveller from an ancient land,
Walked away quietly without a word.
And I stood there pondering
Does the traveller truly understood the power of the strength and beauty met together?

I never saw the traveller from another land again.
My message was simple but factual; however, powerful and true.
Unlike Ozymandias' power and works where nothing besides remains,
Texas will forever be stamped in the hearts of those who are kept by her.



Revelation with Robert Penn Warren

Far from Marseilles or St. Petersburg,
no lost Dauphin or future Czar,
Kentucky was your home—
simpler pleasures of the cedars moonlit at night
and the whippoorwills that called till light.

But even the base-born innately fear the fall,
the loss of the time before,
so that anticipated joys turn into unspeakable fears.
And in mute separateness stands the other who
cannot hear the call.

Yet in separateness love learns definition,
and the loved one lost becomes the beloved—
more solid than the fallen world below.

Your wound is in the front now.
Your hand open and empty like a lifesaver
that drifts toward another.

To heal the hole,
To restore the whole.

by Bonnie Rath