

John Donne (1572–1631)
The Canonization

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five grey hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
5 Take you a course, get you a place,
 Observe his Honour, or his Grace,
Or the King's real, or his stamped face
 Contemplate; what you will, approve,
 So you will let me love.

10 Alas, alas, who's injur'd by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
 Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a [forward](#) spring remove?
 When did the heats which my veins fill
15 Add one more to the plaguy bill?
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
 Though she and I do love.

20 Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,
 We are tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find the eagle and the dove;
 The phoenix riddle hath more wit
 By us; we two being one, are it.
25 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
 Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
 And if unfit for tombs and hearse
 30 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
 And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
 We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
 As well a well wrought urn becomes
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
 35 And by these hymns all shall approve
 Us canonized for love;

 And thus invoke us; 'You, whom reverend love
 Made one another's hermitage;
 You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
 40 Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove,
 Into the glasses of your eyes,
 So made such mirrors, and such spies,
 That they did all to you epitomize,
 Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
 A pattern of your love!'

The Major Works, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 96–97. [Digital Donne](#) has facsimiles of the [first printed edition](#) (1633) and [manuscripts](#). Helpful glosses in the text at [Representative Poetry Online](#), but some knots will remain. Look up the title in the [OED](#). Carey suggests that “drove, / Into the glasses” is an image of forcing the soul into glass vials by alchemy.

George Herbert (1593–1633)
Easter-wings

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
5 Most poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
10 Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
15 Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine
And feel thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
20 Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

George Herbert, *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), 43.

Next page: George Herbert, *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (Cambridge: Francis Green, 1633), 34–35, [Early English Books Online](#). In the manuscripts these poems are written out horizontally as above, not vertically as in the early printing on the next page.

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Easter

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 And still with sicknesses and paine
 Thou didst so punish sinne,
 That I became
 Most thine.
 With thee
 Let me combine,
 And feel this day thy victories:
 For, if I imp my wing on thine,
 Affliction shall advance the flight in me,

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John Keats (1795–1821)
Ode on a Grecian Urn

I

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:
5 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?
10 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2

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:
15 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,
20 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;
 25 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,
 30 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?
 35 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
 40 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
 45 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
 50 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

John Keats, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1820), 113–16,
[HathiTrust](#). Some annotations at [Representative Poetry Online](#). The quotation marks at the end may not be as
 Keats intended—the first published version doesn't have them—and no one is quite sure who is saying which words.
 I have preserved the indentation of the 1820 printing, but modern editions align rhyming lines in all the stanzas.

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)
The Convergence of the Twain
(*Lines on the loss of the “Titanic”*)

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

5 Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents **thrid**, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

10 Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
15 And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” . . .

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

20 Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

25 Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
30 On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

Satires of Circumstance: Lyrics and Reveries; with Miscellaneous Pieces (London: Macmillan, 1914), 9–11, [HathiTrust](#).

This poem is in the "Lyrics and Reveries" section of the volume.

Thomas Hardy
The Voice

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,
Saying that now you are not as you were
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
But as at first, when our day was fair.

5 Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
Even to the original air-blue gown!

10 Or is it only the breeze in its listlessness
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,
You being ever consigned to existlessness,
Heard no more again far or near?

15 Thus I; faltering forward,
Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward
And the woman calling.

December 1912.

Ibid., 109, [HathiTrust](#). This poem is part of the sequence “Poems of 1912–13,” which elegizes Hardy’s wife Emma (who died in November 1912). Hardy later rewrote l. 11 as “You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness.”

Marianne Moore (1887–1972)
The Fish

wade
through black jade.
Of the crow-blue mussel-shells, one
keeps
5 adjusting the ash-heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an
injured fan.
The barnacles which encrust the
10 side
of the wave, cannot hide
there for the submerged shafts of the

sun,
split like spun
15 glass, move themselves with spotlight swift-
ness
into the crevices—
in and out, illuminating

the
20 turquoise sea
of bodies. The water drives a
wedge
of iron through the iron edge
of the cliff, whereupon the stars,

25 pink
rice-grains, ink-
bespattered jelly fish, crabs like
green
lilies and submarine
30 toadstools, slide each on the other.

All
 external
 marks of abuse are present on
 this
 35 defiant edifice—
 all the physical features of

 ac-
 cident—lack
 of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns,
 40 and
 hatchet strokes, these things stand
 out on it; the chasm-side is

 dead.
 Repeated
 45 evidence has proved that it can
 live
 on what can not revive
 its youth. The sea grows old in it.

Observations, 2nd ed. (New York: Dial Press, 1925), 43–44, [HathiTrust](#). The first publication, in the little magazine *The Egoist* 5, no. 7 (August 1918): 95, printed these stanzas as flush-left quatrains. In later collections Moore relineated the stanzas again, combining the third and fourth lines of each and adjusting the indentation pattern.

W. H. Auden (1907–1973)
In Memory of W. B. Yeats
(d. January 1939)

I

He disappeared in the dead of winter:
The brooks were frozen, the air-ports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.
5 O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
10 By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,
An afternoon of nurses and rumours;
The provinces of his body revolted,
15 The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed; he became his admirers.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
20 To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

25 But in the importance and noise of to-morrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of the Bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are fairly accustomed,
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom,
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual.
30 O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

2

You were silly like us; your gift survived it all:
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself; mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
35 Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper; it flows south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
40 Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

3

Earth, receive an honoured guest;
William Yeats is laid to rest:
Let the Irish vessel lie
45 Emptied of its poetry.

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

50 Worships language and forgives
 Everyone by whom it lives;
 Pardons cowardice, conceit,
 Lays its honours at their feet.

 55 Time that with this strange excuse
 Pardoned [Kipling](#) and his views,
 And will pardon [Paul Claudel](#),
 Pardons him for writing well.

 60 In the nightmare of the dark
 All the dogs of Europe bark,
 And the living nations wait,
 Each sequestered in its hate;

 Intellectual disgrace
 Stares from every human face,
 And the seas of pity lie
 65 Locked and frozen in each eye.

 Follow, poet, follow right
 To the bottom of the night,
 With your unconstraining voice
 Still persuade us to rejoice;

 70 With the farming of a verse
 Make a vineyard of the curse,
 Sing of human unsuccess
 In a rapture of distress;

 In the deserts of the heart
 75 Let the healing fountain start,
 In the prison of his days
 Teach the free man how to praise.

Another Time: Poems (New York, Random House, 1940), 93–96. Auden later excised the second, third, and fourth stanzas of section 3. As for Yeats, it is enough to know that by the time of his death he had been internationally famous as a great Irish poet for decades, that Auden shared this estimation, and that Auden thought Yeats's fascist-leaning politics were evil.

Wallace Stevens (1879–1955)
Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour

Light the first light of evening, as in a room
In which we rest and, for small reason, think
The world imagined is the ultimate good.

5 This is, therefore, the intensest rendezvous.
It is in that thought that we collect ourselves,
Out of all the indifferences, into one thing:

Within a single thing, a single shawl
Wrapped tightly round us, since we are poor, a warmth,
A light, a power, the miraculous influence.

10 Here, now, we forget each other and ourselves.
We feel the obscurity of an order, a whole,
A knowledge, that which arranged the rendezvous.

Within its vital boundary, in the mind.
We say God and the imagination are one ...
15 How high that highest candle lights the dark.

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,
We make a dwelling in the evening air,
In which being there together is enough.

The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York: Knopf, 1954), 524. Digitized in [Literature Online](#).

Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979)
Sestina

September rain falls on the house.
In the failing light, the old grandmother
sits in the kitchen with the child
beside the Little Marvel Stove,
5 reading the jokes from the almanac,
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house
were both foretold by the almanac,
10 but only known to a grandmother.
The iron kettle sings on the stove.
She cuts some bread and says to the child,

It's time for tea now; but the child
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears
15 dance like mad on the hot black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the house.
Tidying up, the old grandmother
hangs up the clever almanac

on its string. Birdlike, the almanac
20 hovers half open above the child,
hovers above the old grandmother
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.
She shivers and says she thinks the house
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.

It was to be, says the Marvel Stove.
I know what I know, says the almanac.
With crayons the child draws a rigid house
and a winding pathway. Then the child
25 puts in a man with buttons like tears
30 and shows it proudly to the grandmother.

But secretly, while the grandmother
 busies herself about the stove,
 the little moons fall down like tears
 from between the pages of the almanac
 into the flower bed the child
 has carefully placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.
 The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove
 and the child draws another inscrutable house.

Poems, Prose, and Letters, ed. Robert Giroux and Lloyd Schwarz (New York: Library of America, 2008), 120–21.
 The poem appeared in Bishop's *Questions of Travel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965).

Form note: please read the entry on “Sestina” in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., ed. Roland Greene, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): 1296–97, [ProQuest](#).