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## **Антологія новітньої американської поезії**

*(Укладено за виданням: The Norton Anthology of Poetry/  
Edited by Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon  
Stallworthy. – 4<sup>th</sup> ed. – New York: W.W. Norton & Company,  
Inc., 1996. – 1998 pp.*

### **Поезія мови**

*Michael Palmer*

#### **Fifth Prose**

Because I'm writing about the snow not the sentence  
Because there is a card – a visitor's card – and on that card there are  
words of ours arranged in a row

and on those words we have written house, we have written leave  
this

house, we  
have written be this house, the spiral of a house, channels through this  
house

and we have written The Provinces and The Reversal and  
something  
called the Human Poems  
though we live in a valley on the Hill of Ghosts

Still for many days the rain will continue to fall  
A voice will say Father I am burning

Father I've removed a stone from a wall, erased a picture from that  
wall,  
a picture of ships – cloud ships – pressing toward the sea

words only  
taken limb by limb apart

Because we are not alive not alone  
but ordinary extracts from the tablets

Hassan the Arab and his wife  
who did vaulting and balancing

Coleman and Burgess, and Adele Newsome

pitched among the spectators one night  
 Lizzie Keys  
 and Fred who fell from the trapeze  
 into the sawdust  
 and wasn't hurt at all

and Jacob Hall the rope-dancer  
 Little Sandy and Sam Sault

Because there is a literal shore, a letter that's blood-red  
 Because in this dialect the eyes are crossed or quartz

seeing swimmer and seeing rock  
 statue then shadow

and here in the lake  
 first a razor then a fact  
 1988

## Нові формалісти

*Gjertrud Schnackenberg*

### **Darwin in 1881**

Sleepless as Prospero back in his bedroom  
 In Milan, with all his miracles  
 Reduced to sailors' tales,  
 He sits up in the dark. The islands loom.  
 His seasickness upwells,  
 Silence creeps by in memory as it crept  
 By him on water, while the sailors slept,  
 From broken eggs and vacant tortoise shells.  
 His voyage around the cape of middle age  
 Comes, with a feat of insight, to a close,  
 The same way Prospero's  
 Ended before he left the stage  
 To be led home across the blue-white sea,  
 When he had spoken of the clouds and globe,  
 Breaking his wand, and taking off his robe:  
 Knowledge increases unreality.

He quickly dresses.

Form wavers like his shadow on the stair  
As he descends, in need of air  
To cure his dizziness,  
Down past the ship-sunk emptiness  
Of grownup children's rooms and hallways where  
The family portraits stare,  
All haunted by each other's likenesses.

Outside, the orchard and a piece of moon  
Are islands, he an island as he walks,  
Brushing against weed stalks.  
By hook and plume  
The seeds gathering on his trouser legs  
Are archipelagoes, like nests he sees  
Shadowed in branching, ramifying trees,  
Each with unique expressions in its eggs.  
Different islands conjure  
Different beings; different beings call  
From different isles. And after all  
His scrutiny of Nature  
All he can see  
Is how it will grow small, fade, disappear,  
A coastline fading from a traveler  
Aboard a survey ship. Slowly,  
As coasts depart,  
Nature had left behind a naturalist  
Bound for a place where species don't exist,  
Where no emergence has a counterpart.

He's heard from friends  
About the other night, the banquet hall  
Ringed with bravos – like a curtain call,  
He thinks, when the performance ends,  
Failing to summon from the wings  
An actor who had lost his taste for verse,  
Having beheld, in larger theaters,  
Much greater banquet vanishings

Without the quaint device and thunderclap  
Required in Act 3.  
He wrote, Let your indulgence set me free,  
To the Academy, and took a nap

Beneath a *London Daily* tent,  
Then pattered on his hothouse walk  
Watching his orchids beautifully stalk  
Their unreturning paths, where each descendant  
Is the last –  
Their inner staircases  
Haunted by vanished insect faces  
So tiny, so intolerably vast.  
And, while they gave his proxy the award,  
He dined in Downe and stayed up rather late  
For backgammon with his beloved mate,  
Who reads his books and is, quite frankly, bored.

Now, done with beetle jaws and beaks of gulls  
And bivalve hinges, now, utterly done,  
One miracle remains, and only one.  
An ocean swell of sickness rushes, pulls,  
He leans against the fence  
And lights a cigarette and deeply draws,  
Done with fixed laws,  
Done with experiments  
Within his greenhouse heaven where  
His offspring, Frank, for half the afternoon  
Played, like an awkward angel, his bassoon  
Into the humid air  
So he could tell  
If sound would make a Venus's-flytrap close.  
And, done for good with scientific prose,  
That raging hell  
Of tortured grammars writhing on their stakes,  
He'd turned to his memoirs, chuckling to write  
About his boyhood in an upright  
Home: a boy preferring gartersnakes  
To schoolwork, a lazy, strutting liar  
Who quite provoked her aggravated look,  
Shushed in the drawing room behind her book,  
His bossy sister itching with desire  
To tattletale – yes, that was good.  
But even then, much like the conjurer  
Grown cranky with impatience to abjure  
All his gigantic works and livelihood

In order to immerse  
Himself in tales where he could be the man  
In Once upon a time there was a man,

He'd quite by chance beheld the universe:  
A disregarded game of chess  
Between two love – dazed heirs  
Who fiddle with the tiny pairs  
Of statues in their hands, while numberless  
Abstract unseen  
Combinings on the silent board remain  
Unplayed forever when they leave the game  
To turn, themselves, into a king and queen.  
Now, like the coming day,  
Inhaled smoke illuminates his nerves.  
He turns, taking the sandwalk as it curves  
Back to the yard, the house, the entrance way  
Where, not to waken her,

He softly shuts the door.  
And leans against it for a spell before  
He climbs the stairs, holding the banister,  
Up to their room: there  
Emma sleeps, moored  
In illusion, blown past the storm he conjured  
With his book, into a harbor  
Where it all comes clear,  
Where island beings leap from shape to shape  
As to escape  
Their terrifying turns to disappear.  
He lies down on the quilt,  
He lies down like a fabulous-headed  
Fossil in a vanished riverbed,  
In ocean drifts, in canyon floors, in silt,  
In lime, in deepening blue ice,  
In cliffs obscured as clouds gather and float;  
He lies down in his boots and overcoat,  
And shuts his eyes.  
1982

*Brad Leithauser*

**In Minako Wada's House**

In old Minako Wada's house  
Everything has its place,  
And mostly out of sight:  
    Bedding folded away  
    All day, brought down  
    From the shelf at night,

    Tea things underneath  
Low tea table and tablecloth –  
And sliding screen doors,  
    Landscape-painted, that hide  
    Her clothes inside a wash  
    Of mountains. Here, the floors

    Are a clean-fitting mosaic,  
Mats of a texture like  
A broom's; and in a niche  
    In the tearoom wall  
    Is a shrine to all of her  
    Ancestors, before which

    She sets each day  
A doll-sized cup of tea,  
A doll-sized bowl of rice.  
    She keeps a glass jar  
    Of crickets that are fed fish  
    Shavings, an eggplant slice,  
    And whose hushed chorus,  
Like the drowsy toss  
Of a baby's rattle, moves in  
    On so tranquil a song  
    It's soon no longer heard.  
    The walls are thin

    In Minako Wada's little house,  
Open to every lifting voice  
On the street – by day, the cries  
    Of the children, at night  
    Those excited, sweet,  
    Reiterated goodbyes

Of men full of beer who now  
Must hurry home. Just to  
Wake in the night inside this nest,  
Late, the street asleep (day done,  
Day not yet begun), is what  
Perhaps she loves best.

1985

### Old Bachelor Brother

Here from his prominent but thankfully  
uncentral position at the head of the church –  
a flanking member of the groom's large party –  
he stands and waits to watch the women march

up the wide aisle, just the way they did  
at last night's long and leaden-joked rehearsal.  
Only this time, it's all changed. There's now a crowd,  
of course, and walls of lit stained glass, and Purcell

ringing from the rented organist,  
and yet the major difference, the one  
that hits his throat as a sort of smoky thirst,  
is how, so far away, the church's main  
doors are flung back, uncovering a square  
of sun that streams into the narthex, so that  
the women who materialize there  
do so in blinding silhouette,

and these are not the women he has helloed  
and kissed, and who have bored, ignored, or teased him,  
but girls – whose high, garlanded hair goes haloed  
by the noon-light. . . The years have dropped from them.

One by one they're bodied forth, edged with flame,  
as new as flame, destined to part the sea  
of faces on each side, and approaching him  
in all their passionate anonymity.

1990

## Сюрреалісти та екзистенціалісти

*Mark Strand*

**Always**  
*for Charles Simic*

Always so late in the day  
In their rumpled clothes, sitting  
Around a table lit by a single bulb,  
The great forgetters were hard at work.  
They tilted their heads to one side, closing their eyes.  
Then a house disappeared, and a man in his yard  
With all his flowers in a row.  
The great forgetters wrinkled their brows.  
Then Florida went and San Francisco  
Where tugs and barges leave  
Small gleaming scars across the Bay.  
One of the great forgetters struck a match.  
Gone were the harps of beaded lights  
That vault the rivers of New York.  
Another filled his glass  
And that was it for crowds at evening  
Under sulphur yellow streetlamps coming on.  
And afterwards Bulgaria was gone, and then Japan.  
“Where will it stop?” one of them said.  
“Such difficult work, pursuing the fate  
Of everything known,” said another.  
“Down to the last stone,” said a third,  
“And only the cold zero of perfection  
Left for the imagination.” And gone  
Were North and South America,  
And gone as well the moon.  
Another yawned, another gazed at the window:  
No grass, no trees ...  
The blaze of promise everywhere.  
*1990*

*from Dark Harbor*

*XVI*

It is true, as someone has said, that in  
A world without heaven all is farewell.  
Whether you wave your hand or not,

It is farewell, and if no tears come to your eyes  
It is still farewell, and if you pretend not to notice,  
Hating what passes, it is still farewell.

Farewell no matter what. And the palms as they lean  
Over the green, bright lagoon, and the pelicans  
Diving, and the glistening bodies of bathers resting,

Are stages in an ultimate stillness, and the movement  
Of sand, and of wind, and the secret moves of the body  
Are part of the same, a simplicity that turns being

Into an occasion for mourning, or into an occasion  
Worth celebrating, for what else does one do,  
Feeling the weight of the pelicans' wings,  
The density of the palms' shadows, the cells that darken  
The backs of bathers? These are beyond the distortions  
Of chance, beyond the evasions of music. The end

Is enacted again and again. And we feel it  
In the temptations of sleep, in the moon's ripening,  
In the wine as it waits in the glass.

*XX*

Is it you standing among the olive trees  
Beyond the courtyard? You in the sunlight  
Waving me closer with one hand while the other

Shields your eyes from the brightness that turns  
All that is not you dead white? Is it you  
Around whom the leaves scatter like foam?

You in the murmuring night that is scented  
With mint and lit by the distant wilderness  
Of stars? Is it you? Is it really you

Rising from the script of waves, the length  
Of your body casting a sudden shadow over my hand  
So that I feel how cold it is as it moves

Over the page? You leaning down and putting  
Your mouth against mine so I should know  
That a kiss is only the beginning

Of what until now we could only imagine?  
Is it you or the long compassionate wind  
That whispers in my ear: alas, alas?

1993

*W. S. Merwin*

### **Strawberries**

When my father died I saw a narrow valley  
it looked as though it began across the river  
from the landing where he was born but there was no river  
I was hoeing the sand of a small vegetable plot  
for my mother in deepening twilight  
and looked up in time to see a farm wagon  
dry and gray horse already hidden  
and no driver going into the valley  
carrying a casket  
and another wagon  
coming out of the valley behind a gray horse  
with a boy driving and a high load  
of two kinds of berries one of them strawberries

that night when I slept I dreamed of things  
wrong in the house all of them signs  
the water of the shower running brackish  
and an insect of a kind I had seen him kill  
climbing around the walls of his bathroom  
up in the morning I stopped on the stairs  
my mother was awake already and asked me  
if I wanted a shower before breakfast  
and for breakfast she said we have strawberries  
1983

### Losing a Language

A breath leaves the sentences and does not come back  
yet the old still remember something that they could say

but they know now that such things are no longer believed  
and the young have fewer words

many of the things the words were about  
no longer exist

the noun for standing in mist by a haunted tree  
the verb for I

the children will not repeat  
the phrases their parents speak

somebody has persuaded them  
that it is better to say everything differently

so that they can be admired somewhere  
farther and farther away

where nothing that is here is known  
we have little to say to each other

we are wrong and dark  
in the eyes of the new owners

the radio is incomprehensible

the day is glass

when there is a voice at the door it is foreign  
everywhere instead of a name there is a lie

nobody has seen it happening  
nobody remembers

this is what the words were made  
to prophesy

here are the extinct feathers  
here is the rain we saw  
1988

*Robert Bly*

### **Waking from Sleep**

Inside the veins there are navies setting forth,  
Tiny explosions at the water lines,  
And seagulls weaving in the wind of the salty blood.

It is the morning. The country has slept the whole winter.  
Window seats were covered with fur skins, the yard was full  
Of stiff dogs, and hands that clumsily held heavy books.

Now we wake, and rise from bed, and eat breakfast! –  
Shouts rise from the harbor of the blood,  
Mist, and masts rising, the knock of wooden tackle in the sunlight.

Now we sing, and do tiny dances on the kitchen floor.  
Our whole body is like a harbor at dawn;  
We know that our master has left us for the day.  
1962

*Charles Simic*

### A Book Full of Pictures

Father studied theology through the mail  
And this was exam time.  
Mother knitted. I sat quietly with a book  
Full of pictures. Night fell.  
My hands grew cold touching the faces  
Of dead kings and queens.

There was a black raincoat  
    in the upstairs bedroom  
Swaying from the ceiling,  
But what was it doing there?  
Mother's long needles made quick crosses.  
They were black  
Like the inside of my head just then.

The pages I turned sounded like wings.  
"The soul is a bird," he once said.  
In my book full of pictures  
A battle raged: lances and swords  
Made a kind of wintry forest  
With my heart spiked and bleeding in its branches.  
1992

## Поети Нью-Йоркської школи

*Frank O'Hara*

### Ave Maria

Mothers of America  
    let your kids go to the movies!  
get them out of the house so they won't know what you're up to  
it's true that fresh air is good for the body  
    but what about the soul



A little girl with scarlet enameled fingernails  
Asks me what time it is – evidently that's a toy wristwatch  
She's wearing, for fun. And it is fun to wear other  
Odd things, like this briar pipe and tweed coat

Like date-colored sierras with the lines of seams  
Sketched in and plunging now and then into unfathomable  
Valleys that can't be deduced by the shape of the person  
Sitting inside it – me, and just as our way is flat across  
Dales and gulches, as though our train were a pencil

Guided by a ruler held against a photomural of the Alps  
We both come to see distance as something unofficial  
And impersonal yet not without its curious justification  
Like the time of a stopped watch – right twice a day.

Only the wait in stations is vague and  
Dimensionless, like oneself. How do they decide how much  
Time to spend in each? One begins to suspect there's no  
Rule or that it's applied haphazardly.

Sadness of the faces of children on the platform,  
Concern of the grownups for connections, for the chances  
Of getting a taxi, since these have no timetable.  
You get one if you can find one though in principle

You can always find one, but the segment of chance  
In the circle of certainty is what gives these leaning  
Tower of Pisa figures their aspect of dogged  
Impatience, banking forward into the wind.

In short any stop before the final one creates  
Clouds of anxiety, of sad, regretful impatience  
With ourselves, our lives, the way we have been dealing  
With other people up until now. Why couldn't  
We have been more considerate? These figures leaving

The platform or waiting to board the train are my brothers  
In a way that really wants to tell me why there is so little  
Panic and disorder in the world, and so much unhappiness.  
If I were to get down now to stretch, take a few steps

In the wearying and world-weary clouds of steam like great  
White apples, might I just through proximity and aping  
Of postures and attitudes communicate this concern of mine  
To them? That their jagged attitudes correspond to mine,

That their beefing strikes answering silver bells within  
My own chest, and that I know, as they do, how the last  
Stop is the most anxious one of all, though it means  
Getting home at last, to the pleasures and dissatisfactions of  
home?

It's as though a visible chorus called up the different  
Stages of the journey, singing about them and being them:  
Not the people in the station, not the child opposite me  
With currant fingernails, but the windows, seen through,

Reflecting imperfectly, ruthlessly splitting open the bluish  
Vague landscape like a zipper. Each voice has its own  
Descending scale to put one in one's place at every stage;  
One need never not know where one is

Unless one give up listening, sleeping, approaching a small  
Western town that is nothing but a windmill. Then  
The great fury of the end can drop as the solo  
Voices tell about it, wreathing it somehow with an aura

Of good fortune and colossal welcomes from the mayor and  
Citizens' committees tossing their hats into the air.  
To hear them singing you'd think it had already happened  
And we had focused back on the furniture of the air.  
1977

*Kenneth Koch*

### **You Were Wearing**

You were wearing your Edgar Allan Poe printed cotton blouse.  
In each divided up square of the blouse was a picture of Edgar Allan  
Poe.  
Your hair was blonde and you were cute. You asked me, "Do most

boys

think that most girls are bad?"

I smelled the mould of your seaside resort hotel bedroom on your hair  
held in place by a John Greenleaf Whittier clip.

"No," I said, "it's girls who think that boys are bad." Then we read *Snow-*  
*bound* together.

And ran around in an attic, so that a little of the blue enamel was  
scraped off my George Washington, Father of His Country, shoes.

Mother was walking in the living room, her Strauss Waltzes comb in her  
hair.

We waited for a time and then joined her, only to be served tea in cups  
painted with pictures of Herman Melville

As well as with illustrations from his book *Moby Dick* and from his  
novella, *Benito Cereno*.

Father came in wearing his Dick Tracy necktie: "How about a drink,  
everyone?"

I said, "Let's go outside a while." Then we went onto the porch and sat  
on the Abraham Lincoln swing.

You sat on the eyes, mouth, and beard part, and I sat on the knees.  
In the yard across the street we saw a snowman holding a garbage

can

lid smashed into a likeness of the mad English king, George

the

Third.

1962

### Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams

1

I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in next  
summer.

I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do  
and its wooden beams were so inviting.

2

We laughed at the hollyhocks together  
and then I sprayed them with lye.

Forgive me. I simply do not know what I am doing.

3

I gave away the money that you had been saving to live on for the next  
ten years.

The man who asked for it was shabby  
and the firm March wind on the porch was so juicy and cold.

4

Last evening we went dancing and I broke your leg.  
Forgive me. I was clumsy, and  
I wanted you here in the wards, where I am the doctor!  
1962

## Поети стилю “Біт”

*Allen Ginsberg*

### *From Howl* **For Carl Solomon**

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving  
hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an  
angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the  
starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the  
supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of  
cities contemplating jazz,  
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan  
angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated  
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating  
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,  
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene  
odes on the windows of the skull,  
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in  
wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,  
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo with a  
belt of marijuana for New York,  
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley, death,  
or purgatoried their torsos night after night

with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and  
endless balls,  
incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the mind  
leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson, illuminating all the  
motionless world of Time between,  
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns, wine  
drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of teahead joy-  
ride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree vibrations in  
the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn, ashcan rantings and kind king  
light of mind,  
who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to  
holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and children  
brought them down shuddering mouth-wracked and battered bleak  
of brain all drained of brilliance in the drear light of Zoo,  
who sank, all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and sat  
through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to  
the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,  
who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to Belle-  
vue to museum to the Brooklyn Bridge,  
a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the stoops off  
fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out of the moon,  
yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and  
anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and  
wars,  
whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights with  
brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement,  
who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of ambiguous  
picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall,  
suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings and migraines of  
China under junk-withdrawal in Newark's bleak furnished room,  
who wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard won-  
dering where to go, and went, leaving no broken hearts,  
who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars boxcars racketing through snow  
toward lonesome farms in grandfather night,  
who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the Cross telepathy and bop  
kaballa because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet in  
Kansas,  
who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary indian angels  
who were visionary indian angels,  
who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed in supernatu-  
ral ecstasy,  
who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the  
impulse of winter midnight streetlight smalltown rain,

who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking jazz or sex  
or soup, and followed the brilliant Spaniard to converse about  
America and Eternity, a hopeless task, and so took ship to Africa,  
who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico leaving behind nothing  
but the shadow of dungarees and the lava and ash of poetry scattered  
in fireplace Chicago,  
who reappeared on the West Coast investigating the F.B.I., in beards and  
shorts with big pacifist eyes sexy in their dark skin passing out incom-  
prehensible leaflets,  
who burned cigarette holes in their arms protesting the narcotic tobacco  
haze of Capitalism,  
who distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square weeping  
and undressing while the sirens of Los Alamos wailed them down,  
and wailed down Wall, and the Staten Island ferry also wailed,  
who broke down crying in white gymnasiums naked and trembling before  
the machinery of other skeletons,  
who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in policecars  
for committing no crime but their own wild cooking pederasty and  
intoxication,  
who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged off the roof  
waving genitals and manuscripts,  
who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, and  
screamed with joy,  
who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors, caresses  
of Atlantic and Caribbean love,  
who balled in the morning in the evenings in rosegardens and the grass  
of public parks and cemeteries scattering their semen freely to  
whomever come who may,  
who hiccupped endlessly trying to giggle but wound up with a sob behind  
a partition in a Turkish Bath when the blonde & naked angel came  
to pierce them with a sword,  
who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the one eyed shrew  
of the heterosexual dollar the one eyed shrew that winks out of the  
womb and the one eyed shrew that does nothing but sit on her ass  
and snip the intellectual golden threads of the craftsman's loom,  
who copulated ecstatic and insatiate with a bottle of beer a sweetheart a  
package of cigarettes a candle and fell off the bed, and continued  
along the floor and down the hall and ended fainting on the wall  
with a vision of ultimate cunt and come eluding the last gyzyum of  
consciousness,  
who sweetened the snatches of a million girls trembling in the sunset, and

were red eyed in the morning but prepared to sweeten the snatch of  
the sunrise, flashing buttocks under barns and naked in the lake,  
who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-cars,  
N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Den-  
ver – joy to the memory of his innumerable lays of girls in empty  
lots & diner backyards, moviehouses' rickety rows, on mountaintops  
in caves or with gaunt waitresses in familiar roadside lonely petticoat  
upliftings & especially secret gas-station solipsisms of Johns, &  
hometown alleys too,  
who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in dreams, woke on  
a sudden Manhattan, and picked themselves up out of basements  
hungover with heartless Tokay and horrors of Third Avenue iron  
dreams & stumbled to unemployment offices,  
who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the snowbank docks  
waiting for a door in the East River to open to a room full of steam-  
heat and opium,  
who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-banks of the  
Hudson under the wartime blue floodlight of the moon & their  
heads shall be crowned with laurel in oblivion,  
who ate the lamb stew of the imagination or digested the crab at the  
muddy bottom of the rivers of Bowery,  
who wept at the romance of the streets with their pushcarts full of onions  
and bad music,  
who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge, and rose up  
to build harpsichords in their lofts,  
who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned with flame under the  
tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates of theology,  
who scribbled all night rocking and rolling over lofty incantations which  
in the yellow morning were stanzas of gibberish,  
who cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail borsht & tortillas dreaming  
of the pure vegetable kingdom,  
who plunged themselves under meat trucks looking for an egg,  
who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot for Eternity out-  
side of Time, & alarm clocks fell on their heads every day for the  
next decade,  
who cut their wrists three times successively unsuccessfully, gave up and  
were forced to open antique stores where they thought they were  
growing old and cried,  
who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Ave-  
nue amid blasts of leaden verse & the tanked-up clatter of the iron  
regiments of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of

advertising & the mustard gas of sinister intelligent editors, or were run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality, who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually happened and walked away unknown and forgotten into the ghostly daze of Chinatown soup alleyways & firetrucks, not even one free beer, who sang out of their windows in despair, fell out of the subway window, jumped in the filthy Passaic, leaped on negroes, cried all over the street, danced on broken wineglasses barefoot smashed phonograph records of nostalgic European 1930's German jazz finished the whiskey and threw up groaning into the bloody toilet, moans in their ears and the blast of colossal steamwhistles, who barreled down the highways of the past journeying to each other's hotrod-Golgotha jail-solitude watch or Birmingham jazz incarnation, who drove crosscountry seventytwo hours to find out if I had a vision or you had a vision or he had a vision to find out Eternity, who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came back to Denver & waited in vain, who watched over Denver & brooded & loned in Denver and finally went away to find out the Time, & now Denver is lonesome for her heroes, who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying for each other's salvation and light and breasts, until the soul illuminated its hair for a second, who crashed through their minds in jail waiting for impossible criminals with golden heads and the charm of reality in their hearts who sang sweet blues to Alcatraz, who retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky Mount to tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys or Southern Pacific to the black locomotive or Harvard to Narcissus to Woodlawn to the daisychain or grave, who demanded sanity trials accusing the radio of hypnotism & were left with their insanity & their hands & a hung jury, who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism and subsequently presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse with shaven heads and harlequin speech of suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy, and who were given instead the concrete void of insulin metrasol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong & amnesia, who in humorless protest overturned only one symbolic pingpong table, resting briefly in catatonia, returning years later truly bald except for a wig of blood, and tears and

fingers, to the visible madman doom of the wards of the madtowns  
of the East,  
Pilgrim State's Rockland's and Greystone's foetid halls, bickering with the  
echoes of the soul, rocking and rolling in the midnight solitude-  
bench dolmen-realms of love, dream of life a nightmare, bodies  
turned to stone as heavy as the moon,  
with mother finally \*\*\*\*\* , and the last fantastic book flung out of the  
tenement window, and the last door closed at 4 AM and the last  
telephone slammed at the wall in reply and the last furnished room  
emptied down to the last piece of mental furniture, a yellow paper  
rose twisted on a wire hanger in the closet, and even that imaginary,  
nothing but a hopeful little bit of hallucination –  
ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're really in  
the total animal soup of time –  
and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed with a sudden  
flash of the alchemy of the use of the ellipse the catalog the meter &  
the vibrating plane,  
who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through images  
juxtaposed, and trapped the archangel of the soul between 2 visual  
images and joined the elemental verbs and set the noun and dash of  
consciousness together jumping with sensation of Pater Omnipotens  
Aeterna Deus  
to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and stand before  
you speechless and intelligent and shaking with shame, rejected yet  
confessing out the soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his  
naked and endless head,  
the madman bum and angel beat in Time, unknown, yet putting down  
here what might be left to say in time come after death,  
and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz in the goldhorn shadow  
of the band and blew the suffering of America's naked mind for love  
into an eli eli lamma lamma sabacthani saxophone cry that shivered  
the cities down to the last radio  
with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of their own  
bodies good to eat a thousand years.

1956

*Gregory Corso*

### **Marriage**

Should I get married? Should I be good?  
Astound the girl next door with my velvet suit and faustus hood?

Don't take her to movies but to cemeteries  
 tell all about werewolf bathtubs and forked clarinets  
 then desire her and kiss her and all the preliminaries  
 and she going just so far and I understanding why  
 not getting angry saying You must feel! It's beautiful to feel!  
 Instead take her in my arms lean against an old crooked tombstone  
 and woo her the entire night the constellations in the sky –

When she introduces me to her parents  
 back straightened, hair finally combed, strangled by a tie,  
 should I sit knees together on their 3rd degree sofa  
 and not ask Where's the bathroom?  
 How else to feel other than I am,  
 often thinking Flash Gordon soap –  
 O how terrible it must be for a young man  
 seated before a family and the family thinking  
 We never saw him before! He wants our Mary Lou!  
 After tea and homemade cookies they ask What do you do for a living?  
 Should I tell them? Would they like me then?  
 Say All right get married, we're losing a daughter  
 but we're gaining a son –  
 And should I then ask Where's the bathroom?

O God, and the wedding! All her family and her friends  
 and only a handful of mine all scroungy and bearded  
 just wait to get at the drinks and food –  
 And the priest! he looking at me as if I masturbated  
 asking me Do you take this woman for your lawful wedded wife?  
 And I trembling what to say say Pie Glue!  
 I kiss the bride all those comy men slapping me on the back  
 She's all yours, boy! Ha-ha-ha!  
 And in their eyes you could see some obscene honeymoon going on –  
 Then all that absurd rice and clanky cans and shoes  
 Niagara Falls! Hordes of us! Husbands! Wives! Flowers! Chocolates!  
 All streaming into cozy hotels  
 All going to do the same thing tonight  
 The indifferent clerk he knowing what was going to happen  
 The lobby zombies they knowing what  
 The whistling elevator man he knowing

The winking bellboy knowing  
Everybody knowing! I'd be almost inclined not to do anything!  
Stay up all night! Stare that hotel clerk in the eye!  
Screaming: I deny honeymoon! I deny honeymoon!  
running rampant into those almost climactic suites  
yelling Radio belly! Cat shove!  
O I'd live in Niagara forever! in a dark cave beneath the Falls  
I'd sit there the Mad Honeyooner  
devising ways to break marriages, a scourge of bigamy  
a saint of divorce –

But I should get married I should be good  
How nice it'd be to come home to her  
and sit by the fireplace and she in the kitchen  
aproned young and lovely wanting my baby  
and so happy about me she burns the roast beef  
and comes crying to me and I get up from my big papa chair  
saying Christmas teeth! Radiant brains! Apple deaf!  
God what a husband I'd make! Yes, I should get married!  
So much to do! like sneaking into Mr Jones' house late at night  
and cover his golf clubs with 1920 Norwegian books  
Like hanging a picture of Rimbaud on the lawnmower  
like pasting Tannu Tuva postage stamps all over the picket fence  
like when Mrs Kindhead comes to collect for the Community Chest  
grab her and tell her There are unfavorable omens in the sky!  
And when the mayor comes to get my vote tell him  
When are you going to stop people killing whales!  
And when the milkman comes leave him a note in the bottle  
Penguin dust, bring me penguin dust, I want penguin dust –  
Yet if I should get married and it's Connecticut and snow  
and she gives birth to a child and I am sleepless, worn,  
up for nights, head bowed against a quiet window, the past behind me,  
finding myself in the most common of situations a trembling man  
knowledged with responsibility not twig-smear nor Roman coin soup –  
O what would that be like!  
Surely I'd give it for a nipple a rubber Tacitus  
For a rattle a bag of broken Bach records  
Tack Della Francesca all over its crib  
Sew the Greek alphabet on its bib  
And build for its playpen a roofless Parthenon

No, I doubt I'd be that kind of father  
 Not rural not snow no quiet window  
 but hot smelly tight New York City  
 seven flights up, roaches and rats in the walls  
 a fat Reichian wife screeching over potatoes Get a job!  
 And five nose running brats in love with Batman  
 And the neighbors all toothless and dry haired  
 like those hag masses of the 18th century  
 all wanting to come in and watch TV  
 The landlord wants his rent  
 Grocery store Blue Cross Gas & Electric Knights of Columbus  
 Impossible to lie back and dream Telephone snow, ghost parking  
 No! I should not get married I should never get married!  
 But – imagine If I were married to a beautiful sophisticated woman  
 tall and pale wearing an elegant black dress and long black gloves  
 holding a cigarette holder in one hand and a highball in the other  
 and we lived high up in a penthouse with a huge window  
 from which we could see all of New York and ever farther on clearer days  
 No, can't imagine myself married to that pleasant prison dream –

O but what about love? I forget love not that I am incapable of love  
 it's just that I see love as odd as wearing shoes –  
 I never wanted to marry a girl who was like my mother  
 And Ingrid Bergman was always impossible  
 And there's maybe a girl now but she's already married  
 And I don't like men and –  
 but there's got to be somebody!  
 Because what if I'm 60 years old and not married,  
 all alone in a furnished room with pee stains on my underwear  
 and everybody else is married! All the universe married but me!

Ah, yet well I know that were a woman possible as I am possible  
 then marriage would be possible –  
 Like SHE in her lonely alien gaud waiting her Egyptian lover  
 so I wait – bereft of 2,000 years and the bath of life.

1960

## Поети школи Сан-Франциско

Gary Snyder

### Four Poems for Robin

#### *Siwashing if out once in Siuslaw Forest*

I slept under rhododendron  
All night blossoms fell  
Shivering on a sheet of cardboard  
Feet stuck in my pack  
Hands deep in my pockets  
Barely able to sleep.  
I remembered when we were in school  
Sleeping together in a big warm bed  
We were the youngest lovers  
When we broke up we were still nineteen.  
Now our friends are married  
You teach school back east  
I dont mind living this way  
Green hills the long blue beach  
But sometimes sleeping in the open  
I think back when I had you.

#### *A spring night in Shokoku-ji*

Eight years ago this May  
We walked under cherry blossoms  
At night in an orchard in Oregon.  
All that I wanted then  
Is forgotten now, but you.  
Here in the night  
In a garden of the old capital  
I feel the trembling ghost of Yugao  
I remember your cool body  
Naked under a summer cotton dress.

#### *An autumn morning in Shokoku-ji*

Last night watching the Pleiades,  
Breath smoking in the moonlight,  
Bitter memory like vomit  
Choked my throat.  
I unrolled a sleeping bag  
On mats on the porch  
Under thick autumn stars.  
In dream you appeared  
(Three times in nine years)  
Wild, cold, and accusing.  
I woke shamed and angry:  
The pointless wars of the heart.  
Almost dawn. Venus and Jupiter.  
The first time I have  
Ever seen them close.

*December at Yase*

You said, that October,  
In the tall dry grass by the orchard  
When you chose to be free,  
“Again someday, maybe ten years.”  
After college I saw you  
One time. You were strange.  
And I was obsessed with a plan.

Now ten years and more have  
Gone by: I’ve always known  
          where you were –  
I might have gone to you  
Hoping to win your love back.  
You still are single.

I didn’t.  
I thought I must make it alone. I  
Have done that.

Only in dream, like this dawn,  
Does the grave, awed intensity  
Of our young love

Return to my mind, to my flesh.

We had what the others  
All crave and seek for;  
We left it behind at nineteen.

I feel ancient, as though I had  
Lived many lives.

And may never now know  
If I am a fool  
Or have done what my  
                  karma demands.

1968

*Lawrence Ferlinghetti*

### Sometime During Eternity...

                                  Sometime during eternity  
  some guys show up  
and one of them  
                                  who shows up real late  
  is a kind of carpenter  
from some square-type place  
  like Galilee  
and he starts wailing  
  and claiming he is hip  
to who made heaven  
  and earth  
  and that the cat  
                                  who really laid it on us  
  is his Dad

And moreover  
he adds  
                                  It's all writ down  
  on some scroll-type parchments  
which some henchmen  
leave lying around the Dead Sea somewheres





the plow  
                  as the whippoorwill,  
the night's tractor, grinds  
his song

                  and no other birds but us  
are as busy (O saisons, o chateaux!

Delires!  
                  What soul  
is without fault?

Nobody studies  
happiness

Every time the cock crows  
I salute him

I have no longer any excuse  
for envy. My life

has been given its orders: the seasons  
seize

the soul and the body, and make mock  
of any dispersed effort. The hour of death

is the only trespass

**II. *The Charge***  
dogwood flakes  
the green

the petals from the apple-trees

fall for the feet to walk on

the birds are so many they are  
loud, in the afternoon

they distract, as so many bees do  
suddenly all over the place

With spring one knows today to see  
that in the morning each thing

is separate but by noon  
they have melted into each other

and by night only crazy things  
like the full moon and the whippoorwill

and us, are busy. We are busy  
if we can get by that whiskered bird,

that nightjar, and get across, the moon  
is our conversation, she will say

what soul  
isn't in default?

can you afford not to make  
the magical study

which happiness is? do you hear  
the cock when he crows? do you know the charge,

that you shall have no envy, that your life  
has its orders, that the seasons

seize you too, that no body and soul are one  
if they are not wrought

in this retort? that otherwise efforts  
are efforts? And that the hour of your flight

will be the hour of your death?

### **III. *Spring***

The dogwood  
lights up the day.

The April moon  
flakes the night.

Birds, suddenly,  
are a multitude  
The flowers are ravined  
by bees, the fruit blossoms

are thrown to the ground, the wind  
the rain forces everything. Noise –

even the night is drummed  
by whippoorwills, and we get

as busy, we plow, we move,  
we break out, we love. The secret

which got lost neither hides  
nor reveals itself, it shows forth

tokens. And we rush  
to catch up. The body

whips the soul. In its great desire  
it demands the elixir

In the roar of spring,  
transmutations. Envy

drags herself off. The fault of the body and the soul  
– that they are not one –

the matutinal cock clangs  
and singleness: we salute you

season of no bungling  
1960  
*Robert Creeley*

### The World

I wanted so ably  
to reassure you, I wanted  
the man you took to be me,

to comfort you, and got  
up, and went to the window,  
pushed back, as you asked me to,

the curtain, to see  
the outline of the trees  
in the night outside.

The light, love,  
the light we felt then,  
grayly, was it, that

came in, on us, not  
merely my hands or yours,  
or a wetness so comfortable,

but in the dark then  
as you slept, the gray  
figure came so close

and leaned over,  
between us, as you  
slept, restless, and

my own face had to  
see it, and be seen by it,  
the man it was, your

gray lost tired bewildered  
brother, unused, untaken –  
hated by love, and dead,

but not dead, for an  
instant, saw me, myself  
the intruder, as he was not.

I tried to say, it is  
all right, she is  
happy, you are no longer

needed. I said,  
he is dead, and he  
went as you shifted

and woke, at first afraid,  
then knew by my own knowing  
what had happened –

and the light then  
of the sun coming  
for another morning  
in the world.  
*1969*

*Denise Levertov*

### **Caedmon**

All others talked as if  
talk were a dance.  
Clodhopper I, with clumsy feet  
would break the gliding ring.  
Early I learned to  
hunch myself  
close by the door:



twice.

Fainting with interest, I hungered back  
and only the fact of her husband & four other people  
kept me from springing on her

or falling at her little feet and crying  
“You are the hottest one for years of night  
Henry’s dazed eyes  
have enjoyed, Brilliance.” I advanced upon  
(despairing) my spumoni. – Sir Bones: is stuffed,  
de world, wif feeding girls.

– Black hair, complexion Latin, jeweled eyes  
downcast... The slob beside her feasts... What wonders is  
she sitting on, over there?  
The restaurant buzzes. She might as well be on Mars.  
Where did it all go wrong? There ought to be a law against Henry.  
– Mr. Bones: there is.  
1964

#### 14

Life, friends, is boring. We must not say so.  
After all, the sky flashes, the great sea yearns,  
we ourselves flash and yearn,  
and moreover my mother told me as a boy  
(repeatingly) “Ever to confess you’re bored  
means you have no

Inner Resources.” I conclude now I have no  
inner resources, because I am heavy bored.  
Peoples bore me,  
literature bores me, especially great literature,  
Henry bores me, with his plights & gripes  
as bad as achilles,

who loves people and valiant art, which bores me.  
And the tranquil hills, & gin, look like a drag  
and somehow a dog  
has taken itself & its tail considerably away  
into mountains or sea or sky, leaving  
behind: me, wag.

1964

29

There sat down, once, a thing on Henry's heart  
so heavy, if he had a hundred years  
& more, & weeping, sleepless, in all them time  
Henry could not make good.  
Starts again always in Henry's ears  
the little cough somewhere, an odor, a chime.

And there is another thing he has in mind  
like a grave Sienese face a thousand years  
would fail to blur the still profiled reproach of. Ghastly,  
with open eyes, he attends, blind.  
All the bells say: too late. This is not for tears;  
thinking.

But never did Henry, as he thought he did,  
end anyone and hacks her body up  
and hide the pieces, where they may be found.  
He knows: he went over everyone, & nobody's missing.  
Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.  
Nobody is ever missing.

1964

40

I'm scared a lonely. Never see my son,  
easy be not to see anyone,  
combers out to sea

know they're goin somewhere but not me.  
 Got a little poison, got a little gun,  
 I'm scared a lonely.

I'm scared a only one thing, which is me,  
 from othering I don't take nothin, see,  
 for any hound dog's sake.  
 But this is where I livin, where I rake  
 my leaves and cop my promise, this' where we  
 cry oursel's awake.

Wishin was dyin but I gotta make  
 it all this way to that bed on these feet  
 where peoples said to meet.  
 Maybe but even if I see my son  
 forever never, get back on the take,  
 free, black & forty-one.  
 1964

## 145

Also I love him: me he's done no wrong  
 for going on forty years – forgiveness time –  
 I touch now his despair,  
 he felt as bad as Whitman on his tower  
 but he did not swim out with me or my brother  
 as he threatened –

a powerful swimmer, to take one of us along  
 as company in the defeat sublime,  
 freezing my helpless mother:  
 he only, very early in the morning,  
 rose with his gun and went outdoors by my window  
 and did what was needed.

I cannot read that wretched mind, so strong  
 & so undone. I've always tried. I – I'm  
 trying to forgive  
 whose frantic passage, when he could not live  
 an instant longer, in the summer dawn  
 left Henry to live on.

1968

155

I can't get him out of my mind, out of my mind,  
He was out of his own mind for years,  
in police stations & Bellevue.  
He drove up to my house in Providence  
ho ho at 8 a.m. in a Cambridge taxi  
and told it to wait.

He walked my living-room, & did not want breakfast  
or even coffee, or even a drink.  
He paced. I'd say Sit down,  
it makes me nervous, for a moment he'd sit down,  
then pace. After an hour or so I had a drink.  
He took it back to Cambridge,

we never learnt why he came, or what he wanted.  
His mission was obscure. His mission was real,  
but obscure.  
I remember his electrical insight as the young man,  
his wit & passion, gift, the whole young man  
alive with surplus love.  
1968

324. *An Elegy for W.C.W., The Lovely Man*

Henry in Ireland to Bill underground:  
Rest well, who worked so hard, who made a good sound  
constantly, for so many years:  
your high-jinks delighted the continents & our ears:  
you had so many girls your life was a triumph  
and you loved your one wife.

At dawn you rose & wrote – the books poured forth –  
you delivered infinite babies, in one great birth –  
and your generosity  
to juniors made you deeply loved, deeply:  
if envy was a Henry trademark, he would envy you,  
especially the being through.

Too many journeys lie for him ahead,  
 too many galleys & page-proofs to be read,  
 he would like to lie down  
 in your sweet silence, to whom was not denied  
 the mysterious late excellence which is the crown  
 of our trials & our last bride.

*1968*

382

At Henry's bier let some thing fall out well:  
 enter there none who somewhat has to sell,  
 the music ancient & gradual,  
 the voices solemn but the grief subdued,  
 no hairy jokes but everybody's mood  
 subdued, subdued,

until the Dancer comes, in a short short dress  
 hair black & long & loose, dark dark glasses,  
 uptilted face,  
 pallor & strangeness, the music changes  
 to 'Give!' & 'Ow!' and how! the music changes,  
 she kicks a backward limb

on tiptoe, pirouettes, & she is free  
 to the knocking music, sails, dips, & suddenly  
 returns to the terrible gay  
 occasion hopeless & mad, she weaves, it's hell,  
 she flings to her head a leg, bobs, all is well,  
 she dances Henry away.

*1968*

*Robert Lowell*

### **Epilogue**

Those blessed structures, plot and rhyme –  
 why are they no help to me now  
 I want to make  
 something imagined, not recalled?  
 I hear the noise of my own voice:

*The painter's vision is not a lens,  
it trembles to caress the light.  
But sometimes everything I write  
with the threadbare art of my eye  
seems a snapshot,  
lurid, rapid, garish, grouped,  
heightened from life,  
yet paralyzed by fact.  
All's misalliance.  
Yet why not say what happened?  
Pray for the grace of accuracy  
Vermeer gave to the sun's illumination  
stealing like the tide across a map  
to his girl solid with yearning.  
We are poor passing facts,  
warned by that to give  
each figure in the photograph  
his living name.  
1977*

*Stanley Kunitz*

### **Robin Redbreast**

It was the dingiest bird  
you ever saw, all the color  
washed from him, as if  
he had been standing in the rain,  
friendless and stiff and cold,  
since Eden went wrong.  
In the house marked For Sale,  
where nobody made a sound,  
in the room where I lived  
with an empty page, I had heard  
the squawking of the jays  
under the wild persimmons  
tormenting him.  
So I scooped him up  
after they knocked him down,

in league with that ounce of heart  
pounding in my palm,  
that dumb beak gaping.  
Poor thing! Poor foolish life!  
without sense enough to stop  
running in desperate circles,  
needing my lucky help  
to toss him back into his element.  
But when I held him high,  
fear clutched my hand,  
for through the hole in his head,  
cut whistle-clean...  
through the old dried wound  
between his eyes  
where the hunter's brand  
had tunneled out his wits...  
I caught the cold flash of the blue  
unappeasable sky.  
1971

### Touch Me

*Summer is late, my heart.*  
Words plucked out of the air  
some forty years ago  
when I was wild with love  
and torn almost in two  
scatter like leaves this night  
of whistling wind and rain.  
It is my heart that's late,  
it is my song that's flown.  
Outdoors all afternoon  
under a gun-metal sky  
staking my garden down,  
I kneeled to the crickets trilling  
underfoot as if about  
to burst from their crusty shells;  
and like a child again  
marveled to hear so clear  
and brave a music pour



Like a man who explores his death  
By the pull of his slow-moving shoulders,  
I hung head down in the cold,  
Wide-eyed, contained, and alone  
Among the weeds,

And my fingertips turned into stone  
From clutching immovable blackness.  
Time after time I leapt upward  
Exploding in breath, and fell back  
From the change in the children's faces  
At my defeat.

Beneath them I swam to the boathouse  
With only my life in my arms  
To wait for the lake to shine back  
At the risen moon with such power  
That my steps on the light of the ripples  
Might he sustained.

Beneath me is nothing but brightness  
Like the ghost of a snowfield in summer.  
As I move toward the center of the lake,  
Which is also the center of the moon,  
I am thinking of how I may be  
The savior of one

Who has already died in my care.  
The dark trees fade from around me.  
The moon's dust hovers together.  
I call softly out, and the child's  
Voice answers through blinding water.  
Patiently, slowly,

He rises, dilating to break  
The surface of stone with his forehead.  
He is one I do not remember  
Having ever seen in his life.  
The ground I stand on is trembling  
Upon his smile.

I wash the black mud from my hands.  
On a light given off by the grave  
I kneel in the quick of the moon  
At the heart of a distant forest  
And hold in my arms a child  
Of water, water, water.

*Richard Hugo*

### **The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir**

Not my hands but green across you now.  
Green tons hold you down, and ten bass curve  
teasing in your hair. Summer slime  
will pile deep on your breast. Four months of ice  
will keep you firm. I hope each spring  
to find you tangled in those pads  
pulled not quite loose by the spillway pour,  
stars in dead reflection off your teeth.  
Lie there lily still. The spillway's closed.  
Two feet down most lakes are common gray.  
This lake is dark from the black blue Mission range  
climbing sky like music dying Indians once wailed.  
On ocean beaches, mystery fish  
are offered to the moon. Your jaws go blue.  
Your hands start waving every wind.  
Wave to the ocean where we crushed a mile of foam.

We still love there in thundering foam  
and love. Whales fall in love with gulls  
and tide reclaims the Dolly skeletons  
gone with a blast of aching horns to China.  
Landlocked in Montana here  
the end is limited by light, the final note  
will trail off at the farthest point we see,  
already faded, lover, where you bloat.

All girls should be nicer. Arrows rain  
above us in the Indian wind. My future  
should be full of windy gems, my past

will stop this roaring in my dreams.  
 Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. But the arrows sing:  
 no way to float her up. The dead sink  
 from dead weight. The Mission range  
 turns this water black late afternoons.

One boy slapped the other. Hard.  
 The slapped boy talked until his dignity  
 dissolved, screamed a single “stop”  
 and went down sobbing in the company pond.  
 I swam for him all night. My only suit  
 got wet and factory hands went home.  
 No one cared the coward disappeared.  
 Morning then: cold music I had never heard.

Loners like work best on second shift.  
 No one liked our product and the factory closed.  
 Off south, the bison multiply so fast  
 a slaughter’s mandatory every spring  
 and every spring the creeks get fat  
 and Kicking Horse fills up. My hope is vague.  
 The far blur of your bones in May  
 may be nourished by the snow.

The spillway’s open and you spill out  
 into weather, lover down the bright canal  
 and mother, irrigating crops  
 dead Indians forgot to plant.  
 I’m sailing west with arrows to dissolving foam  
 where waves strand naked Dollys.  
 Their eyes are white as oriental mountains  
 and their tongues are teasing oil from whales.  
 1973

*Elizabeth Bishop*

**The Armadillo**  
**For Robert Lowell**

This is the time of year  
 when almost every night

the frail, illegal fire balloons appear.  
Climbing the mountain height,

rising toward a saint  
still honored in these parts,  
the paper chambers flush and fill with light  
that comes and goes, like hearts.

Once up against the sky it's hard  
to tell them from the stars –  
planets, that is – the tinted ones:  
Venus going down, or Mars,  
or the pale green one. With a wind,  
they flare and falter, wobble and toss;  
but if it's still they steer between  
the kite sticks of the Southern Cross,

receding, dwindling, solemnly  
and steadily forsaking us,  
or, in the downdraft from a peak,  
suddenly turning dangerous.

Last night another big one fell.  
It splattered like an egg of fire  
against the cliff behind the house.  
The flame ran down. We saw the pair

of owls who nest there flying up  
and up, their whirling black-and-white  
stained bright pink underneath, until  
they shrieked up out of sight.

The ancient owls' nest must have burned.  
Hastily, all alone,  
a glistening armadillo left the scene,  
rose-flecked, head down, tail down,

and then a baby rabbit jumped out,  
*short*-eared, to our surprise.  
So soft! – a handful of intangible ash  
with fixed, ignited eyes.

*Too pretty, dreamlike mimicry!  
O falling fire and piercing cry  
and panic, and a weak mailed fist  
clenched ignorant against the sky!*

*Philip Levine*

### **The Simple Truth**

I bought a dollar and a half's worth of small red potatoes,  
took them home, boiled them in their jackets  
and ate them for dinner with a little butter and salt.  
Then I walked through the dried fields  
on the edge of town. In middle June the light  
hung on in the dark furrows at my feet,  
and in the mountain oaks overhead the birds  
were gathering for the night, the jays and mockers  
squawking back and forth, the finches still darting  
into the dusty light. The woman who sold me  
the potatoes was from Poland; she was someone  
out of my childhood in a pink spangled sweater and sunglasses  
praising the perfection of all her fruits and vegetables  
at the road-side stand and urging me to taste  
even the pale, raw sweet corn trucked all the way,  
she swore, from New Jersey. "Eat, eat," she said,  
"Even if you don't I'll say you did."

Some things  
you know all your life. They are so simple and true  
they must be said without elegance, meter and rhyme,  
they must be laid on the table beside the salt shaker,  
the glass of water, the absence of light gathering  
in the shadows of picture frames, they must be  
naked and alone, they must stand for themselves.  
My friend Henri and I arrived at this together in 1965  
before I went away, before he began to kill himself,  
and the two of us to betray our love. Can you taste  
what I'm saying? It is onions or potatoes, a pinch  
of simple salt, the wealth of melting butter, it is obvious,

it stays in the back of your throat like a truth  
you never uttered because the time was always wrong,  
it stays there for the rest of your life, unspoken,  
made of that dirt we call earth, the metal we call salt,  
in a form we have no words for, and you live on it.  
1994

*Theodore Roethke*

### **I Knew a Woman**

I knew a woman, lovely in her bones,  
When small birds sighed, she would sigh back at them;  
Ah, when she moved, she moved more ways than one:  
The shapes a bright container can contain!  
Of her choice virtues only gods should speak,  
Or English poets who grew up on Greek  
(I'd have them sing in chorus, cheek to cheek).

How well her wishes went! She stroked my chin,  
She taught me Turn, and Counter-turn, and Stand;  
She taught me Touch, that undulant white skin;  
I nibbled meekly from her proffered hand;  
She was the sickle; I, poor I, the rake,  
Coming behind her for her pretty sake  
(But what prodigious mowing we did make).

Love likes a gander, and adores a goose:  
Her full lips pursed, the errant note to seize;  
She played it quick, she played it light and loose,  
My eyes, they dazzled at her flowing knees;  
Her several parts could keep a pure repose,  
Or one hip quiver with a mobile nose  
(She moved in circles, and those circles moved).

Let seed be grass, and grass turn into hay:  
I'm martyr to a motion not my own;  
What's freedom for? To know eternity.  
I swear she cast a shadow white as stone.  
But who would count eternity in days?  
These old bones live to learn her wanton ways:

(I measure time by how a body sways).  
1958

*Anne Sexton*

### **And One for My Dame**

A born salesman,  
my father made all his dough  
by selling wool to Fieldcrest, Woolrich and Faribo.

A born talker,  
he could sell one hundred wet-down bales  
of that white stuff. He could clock the miles and sales

and make it pay.  
At home each sentence he would utter  
had first pleased the buyer who'd paid him off in butter.

Each word  
had been tried over and over, at any rate,  
on the man who was sold by the man who filled my plate.

My father hovered  
over the Yorkshire pudding and the beef:  
a peddler, a hawker, a merchant and an Indian chief.

Roosevelt! Willkie! And war!  
How suddenly gauche I was  
with my old-maid heart and my funny teenage applause.

Each night at home  
my father was in love with maps  
while the radio fought its battles with Nazis and Japs.

Except when he hid  
in his bedroom on a three-day drunk,  
he typed out complex itineraries, packed his trunk,

his matched luggage  
and pocketed a confirmed reservation,  
his heart already pushing over the red routes of the nation.  
I sit at my desk  
each night with no place to go,  
opening the wrinkled maps of Milwaukee and Buffalo,

the whole U.S.,  
its cemeteries, its arbitrary time zones,  
through routes like small veins, capitals like small stones.

He died on the road,  
his heart pushed from neck to back,  
his white hanky signaling from the window of the Cadillac.

My husband,  
as blue-eyed as a picture book, sells wool:  
boxes of card waste, laps and rovings he can pull

to the thread  
and say *Leicester, Rambouillet, Merino*,  
a half-blood, it's greasy and thick, yellow as old snow.

And when you drive off, my darling,  
Yes, sir! Yes, sir! It's one for my dame,  
your sample cases branded with my father's name,

your itinerary open,  
its tolls ticking and greedy,  
its highways built up like new loves, raw and speedy.

1966

*Sylvia Plath*

### **Lady Lazarus**

I have done it again.  
One year in every ten  
I manage it –

A sort of walking miracle, my skin  
Bright as a Nazi lampshade,  
My right foot

A paperweight,  
My face a featureless, fine  
Jew linen.

Peel off the napkin  
O my enemy.  
Do I terrify? –

The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?  
The sour breath  
Will vanish in a day.

Soon, soon the flesh  
The grave cave ate will be  
At home on me

And I a smiling woman.  
I am only thirty.  
And like the cat I have nine times to die.

This is Number Three.  
What a trash  
To annihilate each decade.

What a million filaments.  
The peanut-crunching crowd  
Shoves in to see  
Them unwrap me hand and foot –  
The big strip tease.  
Gentleman, ladies,

These are my hands,  
My knees.  
I may be skin and bone,

Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.

The first time it happened I was ten.  
It was an accident.

The second time I meant  
To last it out and not come back at all.  
I rocked shut

As a seashell.  
They had to call and call  
And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.

Dying  
Is an art, like everything else.  
I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.  
I do it so it feels real.  
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's easy enough to do it in a cell.  
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.  
It's the theatrical

Comeback in broad day  
To the same place, the same face, the same brute  
Amused shout:

"A miracle!"  
That knocks me out.  
There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge  
For the hearing of my heart –  
It really goes.

And there is a charge, very large charge,  
For a word or a touch  
Or a bit of blood

Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.  
So, so, Herr Doktor.  
So, Herr Enemy.

I am your opus,  
I am your valuable,  
The pure gold baby

That melts to a shriek.  
I turn and burn.  
Do not think I underestimate your great concern.

Ash, ash –  
You poke and stir.  
Flesh, bone, there is nothing there –

A cake of soap,  
A wedding ring,  
A gold filling.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer,  
Beware  
Beware.

Out of the ash  
I rise with my red hair  
And I eat men like air.  
*1965*

*Adrienne Rich*

### **Diving into the Wreck**

First having read the book of myths,

and loaded the camera,  
and checked the edge of the knife-blade,  
I put on  
the body-armor of black rubber  
the absurd flippers  
the grave and awkward mask.  
I am having to do this  
not like Cousteau with his  
assiduous team  
aboard the sun-flooded schooner  
but here alone.

There is a ladder.  
The ladder is always there  
hanging innocently  
close to the side of the schooner.  
We know what it is for,  
we who have used it.  
Otherwise  
it is a piece of maritime floss  
some sundry equipment.

I go down.  
Rung after rung and still  
the oxygen immerses me  
the blue light  
the clear atoms  
of our human air.  
I go down.  
My flippers cripple me,  
I crawl like an insect down the ladder  
and there is no one  
to tell me when the ocean  
will begin.

First the air is blue and then  
it is bluer and then green and then  
black I am blacking out and yet  
my mask is powerful  
it pumps my blood with power  
the sea is another story

the sea is not a question of power  
I have to learn alone  
to turn my body without force  
in the deep element.

And now: it is easy to forget  
what I came for  
among so many who have always  
lived here  
swaying their crenellated fans  
between the reefs  
and besides  
you breathe differently down here.

I came to explore the wreck.  
The words are purposes.  
The words are maps.  
I came to see the damage that was done  
and the treasures that prevail.  
I stroke the beam of my lamp  
slowly along the flank  
of something more permanent  
than fish or weed

the thing I came for:  
the wreck and not the story of the wreck  
the thing itself and not the myth  
the drowned face always staring  
toward the sun  
the evidence of damage  
worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty  
the ribs of the disaster  
curving their assertion  
among the tentative haunters.

This is the place.  
And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair  
streams black, the merman in his armored body  
We circle silently  
about the wreck  
we dive into the hold.

I am she: I am he

whose drowned face sleeps with open eyes  
whose breasts still bear the stress  
whose silver, copper, vermeil cargo lies  
obscurely inside barrels  
half-wedged and left to rot  
we are the half-destroyed instruments  
that once held to a course  
the water-eaten log  
the fouled compass

We are, I am, you are  
by cowardice or courage  
the one who find our way  
back to this scene  
carrying a knife, a camera  
a book of myths  
in which  
our names do not appear.

1973

Підкоряючись спільним для більшості західних країн закономірностям театраль-но-драматургічного і, ширше, загально-культурного поступу, американська драма прокладає в їхніх межах власну траєкторію, обумовлену як спадщиною національних традицій, так і реаліями сьогодення. Проте перед тим, як зосередитися на ній, варто кинути оком на більш широку панораму сучасного театру.

Західна драма останніх десятиліть ХХ ст. зобов'язана своїм гідним подиву розмаїттям не стільки оригінальним творчим ідеям, скільки химерно-винахідливою комбінаторикою елементів найрізноманітніших художніх систем минулого. В цьому вона, власне, вписується в загальні абриси постмодерної культурної моделі останніх десятиліть. "Цеглинка" для драматургічних конструкцій надходять як з напрочуд віддалених, так і з порівняльно близьких за часом культурних епох: від архаїчних ритуалів до театру абсурду, від середньовічних містерій до сюрреалістичних

фантазмагорій, від вуличних вистав до традиційних далекосхідних театральних шкіл, від маньєристично-барокової постелизаветинської сцени до експериментів дадаїстів, від театру жорстокості Арто до епічного театру Брехта. Хоч, на мою думку, традиція “оповідання історій” продовжує утримувати в драмі свої позиції не менш міцно, ніж у прозі відповідних років, наративу доводиться і на кону поступатися місцем колажу, змонтованому з фрагментів “вторинної реальності”. Театр вносить до процесів, спільних для всієї постмодерної мистецької парадигми, свої корективи, пов’язані з його видовою природою – відсутністю опосередкування тексту друкованою сторінкою, миттєвим зворотним зв’язком, ефектом колективної рецепції. Водночас у кожному випадку інваріант конкретизується та модифікується не лише творчою індивідуальністю письменника, а й відповідними національними традиціями, які живлять драматургію різних країн, попри поточні процеси її глобалізації. За наявності потужного реалістичного струменя для авторів цього періоду характерне й широке звернення до принципів умовного, нереалістичного театру, які дозволяють, на їхню думку, глибше розкрити духовний досвід сучасної людини. Водночас сьогодні драматург все очевидніше змушений поділяти свою колись одноосібну авторську владу з іншими співтворцями вистави, насамперед, режисером та акторами.

Відносну “тишу” в європейській та американській драматургії цього періоду (яка, безумовно, аж ніяк не виключає появи цілого сузір’я цікавих імен) можна пояснити низкою причин. Не остання з них – економічна: театру все складніше витримувати конкуренцію не лише із масово-технізованою індустрією відпочинку, а й із темпом життя, що дедалі прискорюється. Скорочення бюджетних асигнувань субсидованим трупам, нерентабельність традиційних постановочних моделей, боротьба театрів за виживання чинили прямий та непрямий вплив на драматургічну практику. Йдеться не лише про зменшення кількості постановок, а й про перевагу, яка віддається невеликим за обсягом п’єсам з обмеженим набором дійових осіб та нескладним оформленням, що якоюсь мірою стало визначати поетику нової драми. Хоча, як це не парадоксально, деякі письменники визнають, що саме ці вимушені обмеження можуть стати джерелом нової свободи у поводженні з матеріалом.

З іншого боку, на думку більшості дослідників, доба, що

розглядається, позначилася у світовому театрі перенесенням центру ваги з автора п'єси на постановника та виконавця. Ще на початку ХХ століття видатний реформатор сцени, англієць Е.Г. Крег, пророчив: “Коли режисер навчиться сполучати лінії, кольори, рухи та ритм, він перетвориться на митця. Тоді в нас більше не буде потреби в драматургах. Наше мистецтво стане самостійним”. Якоюсь мірою це пророцтво справджується: “найвидиміша” постать у сучасному театрі – це саме режисер, який перетворився на справжнього автора вистави. Стосовно її текстуальної сторони, то в хід часто йдуть класичні (або просто старі) твори; тексти, колективно народжені під час репетицій методом імпровізації або (в найкращому випадку) продукти спільних зусиль драматурга та режисера.

Режисерські пошуки цих десятиліть пов'язані зі спробами повернути театру його первинну функцію ритуалу, що об'єднує людей. Такі спроби виникають не вперше і завжди припадають на кризові моменти історії (як це було, скажімо, на рубежі ХІХ та ХХ ст.), коли фрагментованість, розпорошеність суспільства та втрата цілісності індивідуумом набувають загрозливих масштабів. Яких би розмаїтих форм не набували ці спроби, загальним для них залишається перегляд ролі сценічного слова як ядра театральної вистави, а відтак, і лідерства драматурга. Обґрунтовуючи концепцію “бідного” театру (тобто театру, який відмовився від усього, без чого він може обійтися, не припиняючи бути театром), всесвітньо відомий своїми експериментами польський режисер Єжи Гротовський стверджує, що “текст сам по собі не лежить у підґрунті театру”. Засновник театральної антропології італієць Еудженіо Барба вторить йому: “Те, що театр висловлює словами, не є настільки важливим”. У свою чергу, представник американського авангарду Роберт Вілсон робить наголос на тому, що “слова за своєю суттю не важливіші, ніж освітлення, простір та рух”. Як бачимо, слово зміщується з центрального на вельми скромне місце як один з множини (здебільшого, невербальних) компонентів, котрі складаються в єдине дійство, покликане зруйнувати “четверту стіну” між виконавцями та глядачами. Таке розуміння природи театру породжує діяча нового типу – “тотального автора”, якому підвладні всі елементи вистави. В США таким режисером-драматургом є, наприклад, вже згаданий Р. Вілсон.

Витоки творчості **Роберта Вілсона** (Robert Wilson, 1941 р.н.) слід шукати у зображувальному мистецтві та практичній зацікавленості автора у проблемах психології. Починаючи з 1970-х рр., Вілсон створив понад сто театральних вистав, кіно- та відеофільмів. І якщо багато з них були експериментальними версіями відомих творів, то інші являли собою оригінальні авторські роботи (що, однак, зовсім не виключало широкого звернення до чужих текстів). Паралельно проходили численні художні виставки автора. Творчі принципи Вілсона характеризують його як митця доби постмодерну. Це відмова від звичного сюжету; використання виконавців (так само, як і тексту) як елементів загальної композиції; намагання подолати відстань між мистецтвом та життям шляхом залучення до вистави “повсякденних” дій в реальному часі з метою руйнування театральної ілюзії. “Наша театральна мова була обмежена літературою, – вважає художник. – Я не хочу сказати, що слова не мають значення. Але “зрима книга” не повинна відігравати допоміжну роль по відношенню до “чутної”.

Визнання прийшло до Вілсона завдяки європейському успіхові його вистави “Погляд глухого” (“Deafman Glance”, 1970), удостоєної у Франції нагороди як “найкраща іноземна п’еса року”. Цей спектакль, що ґрунтується на малюнках глухонімого чорношкірого хлопчика, всиновленого Вілсоном, обходився без слів, пропонуючи натомість дивні та лячні образи – ніжності та жорстокості, білого й чорного. В одній з кульмінаційних сцен, що розігрувалася в уповільненому темпі ритуального дійства, біла жінка у чорних рукавичках напоювала білим молоком чорну дитину, після чого встромляла у неї ніж та лагідно колисала в своїх обіймах. Побачивши цю виставу, Луї Арагон написав схвильованого листа своєму давно вже покійному другу, теоретику сюрреалізму Андре Бретону, де вказував, що це незвичне видовище змушує по-новому подивитися на можливості театру.

Найзначнішими постановками були: “Життя та час Йосипа Сталіна” (“The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin”, 1973), “Лист королеві Вікторії” (“A Letter for Queen Victoria”, 1974), “Айнштайн на пляжі” (“Einstein on the Beach”, 1976), “Смерть, руйнація та Детройт” (“Death, Destruction & Detroit”, 1979), “Чорний вершник” (“Black Rider”, 1990), “Білий крук” (“White Raven”, 1998), “По-езія” (“POE-try”, 2000).