

“Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood

This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:

the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see beached skulls

the song nobody knows
because anyone who had heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.

Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?

I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical
with these two feathery maniacs,

I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.

I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song

is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique

at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.

“The History Teacher” by Billy Collins

Trying to protect his students’ innocence
he told them the Ice Age was really just
the Chilly Age, a period of a million years
when everyone had to wear sweaters.

And the stone Age became the Gravel Age,
named after the long driveways of the time.

The Spanish Inquisition was nothing more
than an outbreak of questions such as
“How far is it from here to Madrid?”
“What do you call the matador’s hat?”

The War of the Roses took place in a garden,
and the Enola Gay* dropped one tiny atom
on Japan.

The children would leave his classroom
for the playground to torment the weak
and the smart,
mussing up their hair and breaking their glasses
while he gathered up his notes and walked home
past flower beds and white picket fences,
wondering if they would believe that soldiers
in the Boer War told long, rambling stories
designed to make the enemy nod off.

* The name of the airplane from which an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945.

“We Are Going” by Oodgeroo Noonuccal

They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.

They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: 'Rubbish May Be Tipped Here'.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring.

'We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers.

We belong here, we are of the old ways.

We are the corroboree and the bora ground,

We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.

We are the wonder tales of Dream Time, the tribal legends told.

We are the past, the hunts and the laughing games, the wandering camp fires.

We are the lightning bolt over Gaphembah Hill

Quick and terrible,

And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.

We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.

We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires burn low.

We are nature and the past, all the old ways

Gone now and scattered.

The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.

The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.

The bora ring is gone.

The corroboree is gone.

And we are going.

“Parting Before Daybreak” by An Qi

First the day,
then daybreak,
and finally the time for parting.
Local time in Beijing is 7 o'clock according to the TV.

As a child, I liked to lie in bed
and wait for daybreak,
my silver broach stayed in its soft dormant curve.
I counted my fingers,
exactly ten.

Almost daybreak,
but no light in the sky.
At daybreak you come. Daylight is gone when you go.
Days with light, days without light, days come, days go.
You come, you go, coming and going, walking to me, and away from me.

Now a grown-up, I still daydream,
waiting for daybreak like waiting for an archaeologist
to excavate, patting me with a spade
and expose me to daylight.
Oh, oh, just as I feel the thrill, I see your hand leaving.

Getting to Know You...

Gary Soto:

Years: 1952 – Present

Where: California

Period: Contemporary

- Father killed in a factory at a young age
 - Focus on everyday situations – life of Mexican-American community
 - Taught at Berkley and Riverside
-

Adrienne Rich:

Years: 1929 – 2012

Where: America

Period: Contemporary

- Typical 50's mother – stay at home
 - Radical Feminist – challenging strong held cultural beliefs
 - Came out in 1976
-

John Keats:

Years: 1795 – 1820

Where: England

Period: Romantic

- Dead at age 25 from TB
 - Wanted to marry a girl, but too poor
 - Negative Capability – ability to accept uncertainty and unresolved
-

Robert Frost:

Years: 1874 – 1963

Where: New England

Period: Modern

- Depictions of rural life in NE
- Did not follow popular trends of the time period
- won 4 PPs for poetry

W.H. Auden:

Years: 1907 – 1973

Where: England

Period: Modern

- Rejected Romantic and earlier styles
 - Technical genius
 - Individual life in relation to society – considered left-leaning
-

Allen Ginsberg:

Years: 1926 – 1997

Where: NY/World

Period: Beat

- Considered foremost beat poet and exemplified
 - Spoke out on controversial ideas –war, gay rights, drugs
 - Psychedelic – verse – meditation ----- Buddhism
-

E.E. Cummings:

Years: 1894 – 1962

Where: New York/Paris

Period: Modern

- Known for unique and personal grammar techniques – worked in context
 - Love and Religious poems deemed to be his best work
 - Gained credibility after people looked back on it
-

Edgar Allan Poe:

Years: 1809 – 1849

Where: Baltimore

Period: Romantic

- Originator of horror/detective fiction – major figure in world lit.
 - Dealt with depression/alcoholism/loss -- married 13 year old cousin, she died
 - Gothic themes --- found in the streets
-

Langston Hughes:

Years: 1902 – 1967

Where: New York

Period: Harlem Renaissance

- Focus on AA life in America
 - Innovator of Jazz Poetry –sounds like jazz
 - Thinker founding members of HR
-

Sylvia Plath:

Years: 1932 – 1963

Where: Mass./England

Period: Confessional Movement

- Revolves around “I”
 - Married to fellow poet --- life of depression
 - killed herself
-

Pablo Neruda:

Years: 1904 – 1973

Where: Chile

Period: Modern

- Political – member of communist party
 - Love, loss, the sea, political manifestos
 - PP – controversial – only in green ink (hope)
-

Walt Whitman:

Years: 1819 – 1892

Where: New York

Period: Transcendentalist

- Mix of trans and realism
 - Known for using free verse
 - involved with the Civil War – played a role in his poetry
-

W.B. Yeats

Years: 1865 – 1939

Where: Ireland

Period: Celtic Revival

- Against nationalist movement in Ireland
 - Irish myth and folklore
 - Involved with politics in Ireland – always used traditional poetic forms
-

Maya Angelou

Years: 1928 – 2014

Where: America

Period: Contemporary

- Autobiographical – raped as a child
 - Identity of AA in America
 - Power of women
-

Billy Collins

Years: 1941 – Present

Where: New York

Period: Contemporary

- Jokester/charmer
 - Insight into everyday life
 - U.S. Poet Laureate
-

William Wordsworth

Years: 1770 – 1850

Where: England

Period: Romantic

- Homesickness
- Relationship with French woman – Fr. Revolution
- Traveled



Names & Faces

Poet: _____

Years: _____

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Period: _____

Themes: _____

Poet: _____

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MARCH MADNESS OF POETRY – ROUND 2

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MARCH MADNESS OF POETRY – ROUND 3

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THESIS STATEMENT: _____

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THESIS STATEMENT: _____

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THESIS STATEMENT: _____

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MARCH MADNESS OF POETRY – ROUND 4

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THESIS STATEMENT: _____

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ROUND 2 – SCORECARD

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