

We were so poor. . .

We were so poor I had to take the place of the bait in the mousetrap. All alone in the cellar, I could hear them pacing upstairs, tossing and turning in their beds. "These are dark and evil days," the mouse told me as he nibbled my ear. Years passed. My mother wore a cat-fur collar which she stroked until its sparks lit up the cellar.

—Charles Simic

Conjugal

A man is bending his wife. He is bending her around something that she has bent herself around. She is around it, bent as he has bent her.

He is convincing her. It is all so private.

He is bending her around the bedpost. No, he is bending her around the tripod of her camera.

It is as if he is teaching her to swim. As if he teaches acrobatics. As if he could form her into something wet that he delivers out of one life into another.

And it is such a private thing the thing they do.

He is forming her into the wallpaper. He is smoothing her down into the flowers there. He is finding her nipples there. And he is kissing her pubis there.

He climbs into the wallpaper among the flowers. And his buttocks move in and out of the wall.

—Russell Edson

Happiness

A man and a woman lie on a white bed.
It is morning. I think
Soon they will waken.
On the bedside table is a vase
Of lilies; sunlight pools in their throats.
I watch him turn to her
As though to speak her name
but silently, deep in her mouth—
At the window ledge,
once, twice,
a bird calls.
And then she stirs; her body
fills with his breath.

I open my eyes; you are watching me.
Almost over this room
the sun is gliding.
Look at your face, you say,
Holding your own close to me
to make a mirror.
How calm you are. And the burning wheel
passes gently over us.

—Louise Glück

Vetiver

Ages pass slowly, like a load of hay,
As the flowers recited their lines
And the pike stirred at the bottom of the pond.
The pen was cool to the touch.
The staircase swept upward
Through fragmented garlands, keeping the melancholy
Already distilled in letters of the alphabet.

It would be time for winter now, its spun-sugar
Palaces and also lines of care
At the mouth, pink smudges on the forehead and cheeks,
The color once known as “ashes of roses.”
How many snakes and lizards shed their skins
For time to be passing on like this,
Sinking deeper in the sand as it wound toward
The conclusion. It had all been working so well and now,
Well, it just kind of came apart in the hand
As a change is voiced, sharp
As a fishhook in the throat, and decorative tears flowed
Past us into a basin called infinity
[. . .]

There was no charge for anything, the gates
Had been left open intentionally.
Don't follow, you can have whatever it is.
And in some room someone examines his youth,
Finds it hollow, porous to the touch.
O keep me with you, unless the outdoors
Embraces both of us, unites us, unless
The birdcatchers put away their twigs,
The fishermen haul in their sleek empty nets
And others become part of the immense crowd
Around this bonfire, a situation
That has come to mean to us, and the crying
In the leaves is saved, the last silver drop.

—John Ashberry

AUDUBON

Audubon perfected a new way of drawing birds that he called his.
On the bottom of each watercolor he put "drawn from nature"
which meant he shot the birds.

And took them home to stuff and paint them.
Because he hated the unvarying shapes
of traditional taxidermy

he built flexible armatures of bent wire and wood
on which he arranged bird skin and feathers—
or sometimes

whole eviscerated birds—
in animated poses.
Not only his wiring but his lighting was new.

Audubon colors dive in through your retina
Like a searchlight
Roving shadowlessly up and down the brain

until you turn away.
And you do turn away.
There is nothing to see.

You can look at these true shapes all day and not see the bird.
Audubon understands light as an absence of darkness,
truth as an absence of unknowing.

.....

It is the opposite of a peaceful day in Hokusai.
Imagine if Hokusai had shot and wired 219 lions
And then forbade his brush to paint shadow.

"We are what we make ourselves," Audubon told his wife
when they were courting.

In the salons of Paris and Edinburgh

where he went to sell his new style
this Haitian-born Frenchman
lit himself

as noble rustic American
wired in the cloudless poses of the Great Naturalist.
They loved him

for the “frenzy and ecstasy”
of true American facts, especially
in the second (more affordable octavo edition (*Birds of America*, 1844)).

—Anne Carson

AN OLD IRISH BLESSING

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND
BY MARY STEVENSON

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?"

The Lord replied,
"The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you."

"I BELIEVE IN YOU"
IL DIVO & CELINE DION

Lonely the path you have chosen
A restless road, no turning back
One day you will find your light again
Don't you know
Don't let go be strong

Follow your heart
Let your love lead through the darkness
Back to a place you once knew
I believe I believe I believe in you
Follow your dreams
Be yourself an angel of kindness
There's nothing that you cannot do
I believe I believe I believe in you

Tout seul
Tu t'en iras tout seul
Cœur ouvert
A l'univers
Poursuis ta quête
Sans regarder derrière
N'attends pas
Que le jour
Se lève

Suis ton étoile
Va jusqu'où ton rêve t'emporte
Un jour tu le toucheras
Si tu crois, si tu crois, si tu crois
En toi

Suis ta lumière
N'éteins pas la flamme que tu portes
Au fond de toi souviens-toi
Que je crois, que je crois, que je crois
En toi

Someday I'll find you
Someday you'll find me too
And when I hold you close
I know that it's true

Follow your heart
Let your love lead through the darkness
Back to a place you once knew
I believe I believe I believe in you
Follow your dreams
Be yourself an angel of kindness
There's nothing that you cannot do
I believe I believe I believe in you

"THE PRAYER"
ANDREA BOCELII

I pray you'll be our eyes,
and watch us where we go
And help us to be wise,
in times when we don't know
Let this be our prayer,
when we lose our way
Lead us to the place,
guide us with your grace
To a place where we'll be safe.
La luce che tu dai
I pray we'll find your light
Nel cuore resterà
And hold it in our hearts
A ricordarci che
When stars go out each night
L'eterna stella sei
Nella mia preghiera
Let this be our prayer
Quanta fede c'è
When shadows fill our day
Lead us to a place
Guide us with your grace

Give us faith so we'll be safe
Sognamo un mondo senza più violenza
Un mondo di giustizia e di speranza
Ognuno dia la mano al suo vicino
Simbolo di pace e di fraternità

La forza che ci dia
We ask that life be kind
È il desiderio che
And watch us from above
Ognuno trovi amor
We hope each soul will find
Intorno e dentro a sè
Another soul to love
Let this be our prayer
Let this be our prayer
Just like every child
Just like every child

Need to find a place,
guide us with your grace
Give us faith so we'll be safe
E la fede che
Hai acceso in noi
Sento che ci salverà

"IF I WERE A BOY"

BEYONCE

If I were a boy even just for a day
I'd roll out of bed in the morning
And throw on what I wanted
And go drink beer with the guys

And chase after girls
I'd kick it with who I wanted
And I'd never get confronted for it
'Cause they stick up for me

If I were a boy
I think I could understand
How it feels to love a girl
I swear I'd be a better man

I'd listen to her
'Cause I know how it hurts
When you lose the one you wanted
'Cause he's taking you for granted
And everything you had got destroyed

If I were a boy
I would turn off my phone
Tell everyone it's broken
So they'd think that I was sleeping alone

I'd put myself first
And make the rules as I go
'Cause I know that she'd be faithful
Waiting for me to come home, to come home

If I were a boy
I think I could understand
How it feels to love a girl
I swear I'd be a better man

I'd listen to her
'Cause I know how it hurts
When you lose the one you wanted
'Cause he's taking you for granted
And everything you had got destroyed

It's a little too late for you to come back
Say it's just a mistake
Think I'd forgive you like that
If you thought I would wait for you
You thought wrong

But you're just a boy
You don't understand
And you don't understand, oh
How it feels to love a girl
Someday you wish you were a better man

You don't listen to her
You don't care how it hurts
Until you lose the one you wanted
'Cause you're taking her for granted
And everything you had got destroyed
But you're just a boy

Elizabeth Cauty
September 12, 2009

THINGS SHOULDN'T BE SO HARD- Kay Ryan
A life should leave
deep tracks:
ruts where she
went out and back
to get the mail
or move the hose
around the yard;
where she used to
stand before the sink,
a worn-out place;
beneath her hand
the china knobs
rubbed down to
white pastilles;
the switch she
used to feel for
in the dark
almost erased.
Her things should
keep her marks.
The passage
of a life should show;
it should abrade.
And when life stops,
a certain space—
however small —
should be left scarred
by the grand and
damaging parade.
Things shouldn't
be so hard.

Just Like A Woman-Bob Dylan

Nobody feels any pain
Tonight as I stand inside the rain
Ev'rybody knows
That Baby's got new clothes
But lately I see her ribbons and her bows
Have fallen from her curls.
She takes just like a woman, yes, she does
She makes love just like a woman, yes, she does
And she aches just like a woman
But she breaks just like a little girl.
Queen Mary, she's my friend
Yes, I believe I'll go see her again
Nobody has to guess
That Baby can't be blessed
Till she sees finally that she's like all the rest
With her fog, her amphetamine and her pearls.
She takes just like a woman, yes, she does
She makes love just like a woman, yes, she does
And she aches just like a woman
But she breaks just like a little girl.
It was raining from the first
And I was dying there of thirst
So I came in here
And your long-time curse hurts
But what's worse
Is this pain in here
I can't stay in here
Ain't it clear that--
I just can't fit
Yes, I believe it's time for us to quit
When we meet again
Introduced as friends
Please don't let on that you knew me when
I was hungry and it was your world.
Ah, you fake just like a woman, yes, you do
You make love just like a woman, yes, you do
Then you ache just like a woman
But you break just like a little girl.

"Pulse"- Ani Difranco

you crawled into my bed
like some sort of giant insect
and i found myself spellbound
that night at the sight of you there
beautiful and grotesque and all the rest of that bug stuff
bluffing your way into my mouth
behind my teeth, reaching for my scars
that night we got kicked out of two bars
and laughed our way home

that night you leaned over
and threw up into your hair
and i held you there thinking
i would offer you my pulse
if i thought it would be useful
i would give you my breath
except
the problem with death is that you have
some hundred years and then they can
build building on your only bones
100 years and then your grave is not your own
we lie in out beds, and our graves
unable to save ourselves from
the quaint tragedies we invent
and then undo from the stupid circumstances
we slomen through
and i realized that night that the hall light
which seemed so bright when you turned it on is nothing
compared to the dawn
which is nothing, compared to the light
which seeps from me while you're sleeping beautiful
and grotesque resting caconed in my room
that night we got kicked out of two bars
and laughed our way home
and i held you there thinking
i would offer you my pulse
i would give you my breath
i would offer you my pulse

litany

Tom, will you let me love you in your restaurant?
i will let you make me a sandwich of your invention and i will eat it and call it a carolyn sandwich. then you will kiss my lips and taste the mayonnaise and that is how you shall love me in my restaurant

Tom, will you come to my empty beige apartment and help me set up my daybed?
yes, and i will put the screws in loosely so that when we move on it, later it will rock like a cradle and then you will know you are my baby

Tom, i am sitting on my dirt bike on the deck. Will you come out from the kitchen and watch the people with me?
yes, and then we will race to your bedroom. i will win and we will tangle up on your comforter while the sweat rains from our stomachs and foreheads

Tom, the stars are sitting in tonight like gumball gems in a little girl's jewelry box. Later can we walk to the duck pond?
yes, and we can even go the long way past the jungle gym. i will push you on the swing, but promise me you'll hold tight. if you fall i might disappear

Tom, can we make a baby together? I want to be a big pregnant woman with a loved face and give you a squalling red daughter.
no, but i will come inside you and you will be my daughter

Tom, will you stay the night with me and sleep so close that we are one person?
no, but i will lay down on your sheets and taste you. there will be feathers of you on my tongue and then i will never forget you

Tom, when we are in line at the convenience store can I put my hands in your backpockets and my lips and nose in your baseball shirt and feel the crook of your shoulder blade?

no, but later you can lay against me and almost touch me and when i go i will leave my shirt for you to sleep in so that always at night you will be pressed up against the thought of me

Tom, if I weep and want to wait until you need me will you promise me that someday you will need me?

no, but i will sit in silence while you rage, you can knock the chairs down any mountain. i will always be the same and you will always wait

Tom, will you climb on top of the dumpster and steal the sun for me? It's just hanging there and I want it.

no, it will burn my fingers. no one can have the sun: it's on loan from god. but i will draw a picture of it and send it to you from richmond and then you can smooth out the paper and you will have a piece of me as well as the sun

Tom, it's hot here and I think I'm being born. Will you come back from Richmond and baptise me with sex and cool water?

i will come back from richmond. i will smooth the damp spiky hairs from the back of your wet neck and then i will lick the salt off it. then i will leave

Tom, Richmond is so far away. How will I know how you love me?
i have left you. that is how you will know.

Carolyn Creedon

it may not always be so;and i say

it may not always be so;and i say
that if your lips,which i have loved,should touch
another's,and your dear strong fingers clutch
his heart,as mine in time not fara away;
if on another's face your sweet hair lay
in such a silence as i know,or such
great writhing words as,uttering overmuch,
stand helplessly before the spirit at bay;

if this should be,i say if this should be--
you of my heart,send me a little word;
that i may go unto him,and take his hands,
saying,Accept all happiness from me.
Then shall i turn my face,and hear one bird
sing terribly afar in the lost lands.

Poem by E.E. Cummings

Everclear

“Father of Mine”

Father of mine

Tell me where have you been

You know I just closed my eyes

My whole world disappeared

Father of mine

Take me back to the day

When I was still your golden boy

Back before you went away

I remember blue skies

Walking the block

I loved it when you held me high

I loved to hear you talk

You would take me to the movie

You would take me to the beach

You would take me to a place inside

That is so hard to reach

Father of mine

Tell me where did you go

You had the world inside your hand

But you did not seem to know

Father of mine

Tell me what do you see

When you look back at your wasted life

And you dont see me

I was ten years old

Doing all that I could

It wasnt easy for me

To be a scared white boy

In a black neighborhood

Sometimes you would send me a birthday card

With a five dollar bill

I never understood you then

And I guess I never will

Daddy gave me a name

My dad he gave me a name

Then he walked away

Daddy gave me a name

Then he walked away

My daddy gave me a name

Daddy gave me a name

Daddy gave me a name

Then he walked away

Daddy gave me a name

Then he walked away

My daddy gave me a name

Father of mine

Tell me where have you been

I just closed my eyes

And the world disappeared

Father of mine

Tell me how do you sleep

With the children you abandoned

And the wife I saw you beat

I will never be safe

I will never be sane

I will always be weird inside

I will always be lame

Now Im a grown man

With a child of my own
And I swear Im not going to let her know
All the pain I have known

Then he walked away
Daddy gave me a name
Then he walked away
My dad gave me a name
Then he walked away
My daddy gave me a name
Then he walked away
My daddy gave me a name
Then he walked away
Then he walked away
Then he walked away

Incubus

“Make Yourself”

If I hadnt made me, I wouldve been made somehow
If I hadnt assembled myself, Id have fallen apart by now
If I hadnt made me, Id be more inclined to bow
Powers that be, would have swallowed me up
But thats more than I can allow

If you let them make you, theyll make you paper mache

At a distance youre strong, until the wind comes

Then you crumble and blow away

Khatima Sadiq
9/14/2009
English 102

“It’s amazing I am the reason
Everybody fired up this evening
I am exhausted barely breathing
No matter what you’ll never take that from me
My reign is as far as your eyes can see”

By Kanye, west

*By blood, we are immersed in love of you.
The youth lose their heads for your sake.
I come to you and my heart finds rest.
Away from you, grief clings to my heart like a snake.
I forget the throne of Delhi
when I remember the mountain tops of my Afghan land.
If I must choose between the world and you,
I shall not hesitate to claim your barren deserts as my own.*

By: Ahmad Shah Durrani

*If leadership rests inside the lion's jaw,
So be it. Go snatch it from his jaws.
Your lot shall be greatness, prestige, honor and glory.
If all fails, face death like a man.*

By: Hanzala of Badghis

She is Far from the Land

**She is far from the land, where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers are round her, sighing;
But coldly she turns from their gaze, and weeps,
For her heart in his grave is lying!**

**She sings the wild song of her dear native plains,
Every note which he lov'd awaking
Ah! little they think, who delight in her strains,
How the heart of the Minstrel is breaking!**

**He had lov'd for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwin'd him,
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him.**

**Oh! make her a grave, where the sun-beams rest,
When they promise a glorious morrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep, like a smile from the West,
From her own lov'd Island of sorrow!**

Thomas Moore

The coming of winter

*When Libra travels from the sun, then does winter come.
The world, once weak with summer's heat, grows strong again;
Man eats with joy and finds the taste of water sweet;
Lovers embrace again, arms and lips entwined.*

*The warrior welcomes now his coat; the horse, his winter trappings;
The one feels not his armor; nor the other his saddle's weight.
From SWAT the falcon now returns, like traveled yogi coming home;
And in the radiant moonlight hours comes the heron screaming in the sky.*

Khushal Khan Khattak

Allison Costello

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost: The Road Not Taken (1915)

I just want to see you
When you're all alone
I just want to catch you if I can
I just want to be there
When the morning light explodes
On your face it radiates
I can't escape
I love you till the end

I just want to tell you nothing
You don't want to hear
All I want is for you to say
Why don't you just take me
Where I've never been before
I know you want to hear me
Catch my breath
I love you till the end

Pogues, *Love you till the end.*

Allison Costello

I always believed it was the things you don't choose that makes you who you are. Your city, your neighborhood, your family. People here take pride in these things, like it was something they'd accomplished. The bodies around their souls, the cities wrapped around those. I lived on this block my whole life; most of these people have. When your job is to find people who are missing, it helps to know where they started. I find the people who started in the cracks and then fell through. This city can be hard. When I was young, I asked my priest how you could get to heaven and still protect yourself from all the evil in the world. He told me what God said to His children. "You are sheep among wolves. Be wise as serpents, yet innocent as doves."

Author- Dennis Lehane. Gone Baby Gone

Allison Costello

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go,my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing,my darling)
i fear
no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows
higher than the soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

I carry your heart with me by E. E. Cummings

" Good morning, on July 7

Though still in bed, my thoughts go out to you, my Immortal Beloved, now and then joyfully, then sadly, waiting to learn whether or not fate will hear us - I can live only wholly with you or not at all - Yes, I am resolved to wander so long away from you until I can fly to your arms and say that I am really at home with you, and can send my soul enwrapped in you into the land of spirits - Yes, unhappily it must be so - You will be the more contained since you know my fidelity to you. No one else can ever possess my heart - never - never - Oh God, why must one be parted from one whom one so loves. And yet my life in V is now a wretched life - Your love makes me at once the happiest and the unhappiest of men - At my age I need a steady, quiet life - can that be so in our connection? My angel, I have just been told that the mailcoach goes every day - therefore I must close at once so that you may receive the letter at once - Be calm, only by a calm consideration of our existence can we achieve our purpose to live together - Be calm - love me - today - yesterday - what tearful longings for you - you - you - my life - my all - farewell. Oh continue to love me - never misjudge the most faithful heart of your beloved.
ever thine
ever mine
ever ours"

- Ludwig van Beethoven