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| ***Beware: Do Not Read This Poem*by Ishmael Reed**tonite, thriller wasabout an old woman, so vain shesurrounded herself withmany mirrorsit got so bad that finally shelocked herself indoors & herwhole life became themirrorsone day the villagers brokeinto her house, but she was tooswift for them. she disappearedinto a mirroreach tenant who bought the houseafter that, lost a loved one tothe old woman in the mirror:first a little girlthen a young womanthen the young woman's husbandthe hunger of this poem is legendaryit has taken in many victimsback off from this poemit has drawn in your feetback off from this poemit has drawn in your legsback off from thias poemit is a greedy mirroryou are into this poem. fromthe waist downnobody can hear you can they?this poem has had you up to herebelchthis poem aint got no mannersyou cant call out from this poemrelax now & go with this poem | move & roll on to this poemdo not resist this poemthis poem has your eyesthis poem has his headthis poem has his armsthis poem has his fingersthis poem has his fingertipsthis poem is the reader & thereader the poemstatistic: the US bureau of missing persons re-  ports that in 1968 over 100,000 people  disappeared leaving no solid clues  nor trace     onlya space     in the lives of their friends***Introduction to Poetry*by Billy Collins**"Introduction to Poetry"I ask them to take a poemand hold it up to the lightlike a color slideor press an ear against its hiveI say drop a mouse into a poemand watch him probe his way out,or walk inside the poem's roomand feel the walls for a light switch.I want them to waterskiacross the surface of a poemwaving at the author's name on the shore.But all they want to dois tie the poem to a chair with a ropeand torture a confession out of it.They begin beating it with a hoseto find out what it really means. |
| ***Because You Asked about the Line between Prose and Poetry*by Howard Nemerov**Sparrows were feeding in a freezing drizzleThat while you watched turned into pieces of snowRiding a gradient invisibleFrom silver aslant to random, white, and slow.There came a moment that you couldn't tell.And then they clearly flew instead of fell.***THE POEM WANTS A DRINK* by Karen Glenn**In the workshop, students analyze what each poem wants, what each one strives to be. Well, this poem isa layabout with limited ambitions. It wants a drink.This poem doesn't give a damnfor rhyme or reason. It only sings off-key. It has no rhythm in the jukebox of its soul. It grew up without symbols. It doesn't know from assonance.Give it mambo lessons, and it still won't learn to dance. It hasnot one stanza with a lyric pedigree. It's late, and getting later, and this poemwants a drink.Call it gray and tired. Even call it a cliche. This poem's lived long enoughto know exactly what it means to say: Don't be stingywith the whiskey, baby. .....Yes, the night has been a cruel one, and this poem could use a drink. | ***Sound and Sense*by Alexander Pope**True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,As those move easiest who have learned to dance.'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,The sound must seem an echo to the sense:Soft is the strain when [Zephyr](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry/zephyr.html) gently blows,And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar;When [Ajax](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry/ajax.html) strives some rock's vast weight to throw,The line too labors, and the words move slow;Not so, when swift [Camilla](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry/camilla.html) scours the plain,Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.Hear how [Timotheus'](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry/timo.html) varied lays surprise,And bid alternate passions fall and rise!***kidnap poem*by Nikki Giovanni**ever been kidnappedby a poetif i were a poeti'd kidnap youput you in my phrases and meteryou to jones beachor maybe coney islandor maybe just to my houselyric you in lilacsdash you in the rainblend into the beachto complement my seeplay the lyre for youode you with my love songanything to win youwrap you in the red Black greenshow you off to mamayeah if i were a poet i'd kidnap you |
| ***Ars Poetica*by Archibald MacLeish**A poem should be palpable and muteAs a globed fruit,DumbAs old medallions to the thumb,Silent as the sleeve-worn stoneOf casement ledges where the moss has grown--A poem should be wordlessAs the flight of birds.\*A poem should be motionless in timeAs the moon climbs,Leaving, as the moon releasesTwig by twig the night-entangled trees,Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves.Memory by memory the mind--A poem should be motionless in timeAs the moon climbs.\*A poem should be equal to:Not true.For all the history of griefAn empty doorway and a maple leaf.For loveThe leaning grasses and two lights above the sea--A poem should not meanBut be. | *At the Poetry Reading**By John Brehm*I can’t keep my eyes off the poet’swife’s legs—they’re so much morebeautiful than anything he mightbe saying, though I’m no longerin a position really to judge,having stopped listening some time ago.He’s from the Iowa Writers Workshopand can therefore get along finewithout my attention. He started inreading poems about his childhood—barns, cornsnakes, gradeschool, flowers,that sort of stuff—the loss ofinnocence he keeps talking aboutbetween poems, which I can relate to,especially under these circumstances.Now he’s on to science, a poemabout hydrogen, I think, he’s tryingto imagine himself turning into hydrogen.Maybe he’ll succeed. I’m imaginingmyself sliding up his wife’s fluid,rhythmic, lusciously curved, black-stockinged legs, imagining them archedaround my shoulders, wrapped around my back.My God, why doesn’t he write poems about her!He will, no doubt, once she leaves him,leaves him for another poet, perhaps,the observant, uninnocent one, who knowsa poem when it sits down in a room with him. |

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| ***Eating Poetry*by Mark Strand**Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.There is no happiness like mine.I have been eating poetry.The librarian does not believe what she sees.Her eyes are sadand she walks with her hands in her dress.The poems are gone.The light is dim.The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.Their eyeballs roll,their blond legs bum like brush.The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.She does not understand.When I get on my knees and lick her hand, she screams.I am a new man.I snarl at her and bark.I romp with joy in the bookish dark.***Notes on the Art of Poetry*by Dylan Thomas**I could never have dreamt that there were such goings-onin the world between the covers of books, such sandstorms and ice blasts of words,,, such staggering peace, such enormous laughter, such and so many blinding bright lights,, ,splashing all over the pagesin a million bits and piecesall of which were words, words, words,and each of which were alive foreverin its own delight and glory and oddity and light. | ***An Obsessive Combination of Onotological Inscape, Trickery and Love*by Anne Sexton**Busy, with an idea for a code, I writesignals hurrying from left to right,or right to left, by obscure routes,for my own reasons; taking a word like *writes*down tiers of tries until its secret ritesmake sense; or until, suddenly, RATScan amazingly and funnily become STARand right to left that small staris mine, for my own liking, to stareits five lucky pins inside out, to storeforever kindly, as if it were a starI touched and a miracle I really wrote.***I Stop Writing the Poem*by Tess Gallagher**to fold the clothes. No matter who livesor who dies, I'm still a woman.I'll always have plenty to do.I bring the arms of his shirttogether. Nothing can stopour tenderness. I'll get backto the poem. I'll get back to beinga woman. But for nowthere's a shirt, a giant shirtin my hands, and somewhere a small girlstanding next to her motherwatching to see how it's done. |