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| ***Beware: Do Not Read This Poem* by Ishmael Reed**  tonite, thriller was about an old woman, so vain she surrounded herself with  many mirrors  it got so bad that finally she locked herself indoors & her whole life became the  mirrors  one day the villagers broke into her house, but she was too swift for them. she disappeared  into a mirror each tenant who bought the house after that, lost a loved one to  the old woman in the mirror:  first a little girl  then a young woman  then the young woman's husband  the hunger of this poem is legendary it has taken in many victims back off from this poem it has drawn in your feet back off from this poem it has drawn in your legs  back off from thias poem it is a greedy mirror you are into this poem. from  the waist down nobody can hear you can they? this poem has had you up to here  belch this poem aint got no manners you cant call out from this poem relax now & go with this poem | move & roll on to this poem do not resist this poem this poem has your eyes this poem has his head this poem has his arms this poem has his fingers this poem has his fingertips  this poem is the reader & the reader the poem  statistic: the US bureau of missing persons re-    ports that in 1968 over 100,000 people    disappeared leaving no solid clues    nor trace     only a space     in the lives of their friends  ***Introduction to Poetry* by Billy Collins**  "Introduction to Poetry"  I ask them to take a poem and hold it up to the light like a color slide  or press an ear against its hive  I say drop a mouse into a poem and watch him probe his way out,  or walk inside the poem's room and feel the walls for a light switch.  I want them to waterski across the surface of a poem waving at the author's name on the shore.  But all they want to do is tie the poem to a chair with a rope and torture a confession out of it.  They begin beating it with a hose to 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 drizzle That while you watched turned into pieces of snow Riding a gradient invisible From 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 is a layabout with limited ambitions. It wants  a drink.  This poem doesn't give a damn for 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 has not one stanza with a lyric pedigree.  It's late, and getting later, and this poem wants a drink.  Call it gray and tired. Even call it  a cliche. This poem's lived long enough to know exactly what it means  to say: Don't be stingy with 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 kidnapped by a poet if i were a poet i'd kidnap you put you in my phrases and meter you to jones beach or maybe coney island or maybe just to my house lyric you in lilacs dash you in the rain blend into the beach to complement my see play the lyre for you ode you with my love song anything to win you wrap you in the red Black green show you off to mama yeah if i were a poet i'd kid nap you | |
| ***Ars Poetica* by Archibald MacLeish**  A poem should be palpable and mute As a globed fruit,  Dumb As old medallions to the thumb,  Silent as the sleeve-worn stone Of casement ledges where the moss has grown--  A poem should be wordless As the flight of birds.  \* A poem should be motionless in time As the moon climbs,  Leaving, as the moon releases Twig 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 time As the moon climbs.  \* A poem should be equal to: Not true.  For all the history of grief An empty doorway and a maple leaf.  For love The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea--  A poem should not mean But be. | | *At the Poetry Reading**By John Brehm* I can’t keep my eyes off the poet’s  wife’s legs—they’re so much more  beautiful than anything he might  be saying, though I’m no longer  in a position really to judge,  having stopped listening some time ago.  He’s from the Iowa Writers Workshop  and can therefore get along fine  without my attention. He started in  reading poems about his childhood—  barns, cornsnakes, gradeschool, flowers,  that sort of stuff—the loss of  innocence he keeps talking about  between poems, which I can relate to,  especially under these circumstances.  Now he’s on to science, a poem  about hydrogen, I think, he’s trying  to imagine himself turning into hydrogen.  Maybe he’ll succeed. I’m imagining  myself sliding up his wife’s fluid,  rhythmic, lusciously curved, black-  stockinged legs, imagining them arched  around 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 knows  a 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 sad and 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-on in 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 pages in a million bits and pieces all of which were words, words, words, and each of which were alive forever in 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 write signals 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 rites make sense; or until, suddenly, RATS can amazingly and funnily become STAR and right to left that small star is mine, for my own liking, to stare its five lucky pins inside out, to store forever kindly, as if it were a star I touched and a miracle I really wrote.  ***I Stop Writing the Poem* by Tess Gallagher**  to fold the clothes. No matter who lives or who dies, I'm still a woman. I'll always have plenty to do. I bring the arms of his shirt together. Nothing can stop our tenderness. I'll get back to the poem. I'll get back to being a woman. But for now there's a shirt, a giant shirt in my hands, and somewhere a small girl standing next to her mother watching to see how it's done. |