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### **I Find no Peace**

#### **Sir Thomas Wyatt**

I find no peace, and all my war is done.  
I fear and hope. I burn and freeze like ice.  
I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise;  
And nought I have, and all the world I season.  
That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison 5  
And holdeth me not—yet can I scape no wise—  
Nor letteth me live nor die at my device,  
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.  
Without eyen I see, and without tongue I plain.  
I desire to perish, and yet I ask health. 10  
I love another, and thus I hate myself.  
I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain;  
Likewise displeaseth me both life and death,  
And my delight is causer of this strife.

### **Poor Soul, the Centre of my Sinful Earth (Sonnet 146)**

#### **William Shakespeare**

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
[Why feed'st] these rebel powers that thee array,  
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay? 5  
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?  
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?  
Then soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss 10  
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;  
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;  
Within be fed, without be rich no more.  
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,  
And, Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

### **Prayer (I)**

#### **George Herbert**

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth 5  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best, 10  
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
The land of spices; something understood.

**The Windows**  
**George Herbert**

Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?  
He is a brittle crazy glass;  
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford  
This glorious and transcendent place,  
To be a window, through thy grace. 5

But when thou dost anneal in glass thy story,  
Making thy life to shine within  
The holy preachers, then the light and glory  
More reverend grows, and more doth win;  
Which else shows waterish, bleak, and thin. 10

Doctrine and life, colors and light, in one  
When they combine and mingle, bring  
A strong regard and awe; but speech alone  
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,  
And in the ear, not conscience, ring. 15

**So We'll Go No More a Roving**  
**Byron**

So, we'll go no more a roving  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving,  
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath, 5  
And the soul wears out the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,  
And the day returns too soon, 10  
Yet we'll go no more a roving  
By the light of the moon.

**The Destruction of Sennacherib**  
**Byron**

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green, 5  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed; 10  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf, 15  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown. 20

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

**England in 1819**  
**Percy Bysshe Shelley**

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring;  
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,  
But leechlike to their fainting country cling 5  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.  
A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field;  
An army, whom liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield;  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay; 10  
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;  
A senate, Time's worst statute, unrepealed—  
Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

**From The Mask of Anarchy**  
**Percy Bysshe Shelley**

'Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number--  
Shake your chains to earth like dew 370  
Which in sleep had fallen on you--  
Ye are many -- they are few.'

**The Curse Of Kehama**  
**Robert Southey**

I charm thy life,  
From the weapons of strife,  
From stone and from wood,  
From fire and from flood, 5  
From the serpent's tooth,  
And the beast of blood.  
From sickness I charm thee,  
And time shall not harm thee;  
But earth, which is mine,  
Its fruits shall deny thee; 10

And water shall hear me,  
 And know thee and flee thee:  
 And the winds shall not touch thee  
 When they pass by thee,  
 And the dews shall not wet thee 15  
 When they fall nigh thee.  
 And thou shalt seek death,  
 To release thee, in vain;  
 Thou shalt live in thy pain,  
 While Kehama shall reign, 20  
 With a fire in thy heart,  
 And a fire in thy brain.  
 And sleep shall obey me,  
 And visit thee never,  
 And the curse shall be on thee 25  
 Forever and ever.

**Remembrance**  
**Emily Brontë**

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,  
 Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!  
 Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,  
 Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover 5  
 Over the mountains, on that northern shore,  
 Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover  
 Thy noble heart forever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,  
 From those brown hills, have melted into spring: 10  
 Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers  
 After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,  
 While the world's tide is bearing me along;  
 Other desires and other hopes beset me, 15  
 Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,  
 No second morn has ever shone for me;  
 All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,  
 All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee. 20

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,  
 And even Despair was powerless to destroy,  
 Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,  
 Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion— 25  
 Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;  
 Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten  
 Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,  
 Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain; 30  
 Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,  
 How could I seek the empty world again?

**This Compost**  
**Walt Whitman (1819-1892)**

1

Something startles me where I thought I was safest,  
I withdraw from the still woods I loved,  
I will not go now on the pastures to walk,  
I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea,  
I will not touch my flesh to the earth as to other flesh to renew me. 5  
O how can it be that the ground itself does not sicken?  
How can you be alive you growths of spring?  
How can you furnish health you blood of herbs, roots, orchards, grain?  
Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses within you?  
Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead? 10

Where have you disposed of their carcasses?  
Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations?  
Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?  
I do not see any of it upon you to-day, or perhaps I am deceiv'd,  
I will run a furrow with my plough, I will press my spade through the sod and turn it up underneath, 15  
am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

2

Behold this compost! behold it well!  
Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person—yet behold!  
The grass of spring covers the prairies,  
The bean bursts noislessly through the mould in the garden, 20  
The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,  
The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,  
The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves,  
The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree,  
The he-birds carol mornings and evenings while the she-birds sit on their nests, 25  
The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,  
The new-born of animals appear, the calf is dropt from the cow, the colt from the mare,  
Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves,  
Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk, the lilacs bloom in the door-yards,  
The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of sour dead. 30  
What chemistry!  
That the winds are really not infectious,  
That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea which is so amorous after me,  
That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its tongues,  
That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited themselves in it, 35  
That all is clean forever and forever,  
That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,  
That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,  
That the fruits of the apple-orchard and the orange-orchard, that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will  
none of them poison me,  
That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease, 40  
Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once a catching disease.  
Now I am terrified at the Earth, it is that calm and patient,  
It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,  
It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless successions of diseases'd corpses,  
It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor, 45  
It renews with such unwitting looks its prodigal, annual, sumptuous crops,  
It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last.

from **The Princess: Tears, Idle Tears**  
**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more. 5

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 10

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more. 15

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more! 20

**Crossing the Bar**  
**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home. 5

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark; 10

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar. 15

**No Worst, There Is None**  
**Gerard Manley Hopkins**

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,  
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.  
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?  
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?  
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief 5  
Woe, wórd-sorrow; on an áge-old anvil wince and sing —  
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-  
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief.'"

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap 10  
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,  
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all  
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

**La Figlia che Piange**  
**T S Eliot**

*O quam te memorem virgo ...*

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—  
Lean on a garden urn—  
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—  
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—  
Fling them to the ground and turn 5  
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:  
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,  
So I would have had her stand and grieve,  
So he would have left 10  
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,  
As the mind deserts the body it has used.  
I should find  
Some way incomparably light and deft,  
Some way we both should understand, 15  
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather  
Compelled my imagination many days,  
Many days and many hours:  
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers. 20  
And I wonder how they should have been together!  
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.  
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze  
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.



**The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter**  
**Ezra Pound**

(After Li Po)

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead  
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
And we went on living in the village of Chōkan: 5  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.  
At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back. 10

At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
Forever and forever, and forever.  
Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed 15  
You went into far Ku-tō-en, by the river of swirling eddies,  
And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses, 20  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
Over the grass in the West garden;  
They hurt me. 25  
I grow older.  
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come out to meet you  
As far as Chō-fū-Sa. 30

**Garden Abstract**  
**Hart Crane**

The apple on its bough is her desire,—  
Shining suspension, mimic of the sun.  
The bough has caught her breath up, and her voice,  
Dumbly articulate in the slant and rise  
Of branch on branch above her, blurs her eyes. 5  
She is prisoner of the tree and its green fingers.

And so she comes to dream herself the tree,  
The wind possessing her, weaving her young veins,  
Holding her to the sky and its quick blue,  
Drowning the fever of her hands in sunlight. 10  
She has no memory, nor fear, nor hope  
Beyond the grass and shadows at her feet.

**I Knew a Woman**  
**Theodore Roethke**

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, 5  
Or English poets who grew up on Greek  
(I'd have them sing in a 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; 10  
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: 15  
Her full lips pursed, the errant notes to sieze;  
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 20  
(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. 25  
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).

**High Flight**  
**John Gillespie Magee, Jr**

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, --and done a hundred things 5  
You have not dreamed of --Wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air...  
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue 10  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark or even eagle flew --  
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrampled sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

**To Earthward:  
Robert Frost, 1874 - 1963**

Love at the lips was touch  
As sweet as I could bear;  
And once that seemed too much;  
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,      5  
The flow of—was it musk  
From hidden grapevine springs  
Downhill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache  
From sprays of honeysuckle      10  
That when they're gathered shake  
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those  
Seemed strong when I was young;  
The petal of the rose      15  
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt,  
That is not dashed with pain  
And weariness and fault;  
I crave the stain      20

Of tears, the aftermark  
Of almost too much love,  
The sweet of bitter bark  
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred      25  
I take away my hand  
From leaning on it hard  
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:  
I long for weight and strength      30  
To feel the earth as rough  
To all my length.

**The Poet To Death  
Sarojini Naidu**

TARRY a while, O Death, I cannot die  
While yet my sweet life burgeons with its spring;  
Fair is my youth, and rich the echoing boughs  
Where dhadikulas sing.

Tarry a while, O Death, I cannot die      5  
With all my blossoming hopes unharvested,  
My joys ungarnered, all my songs unsung,  
And all my tears unshed.

Tarry a while, till I am satisfied  
Of love and grief, of earth and altering sky;      10  
Till all my human hungers are fulfilled,  
O Death, I cannot die!

**Sorrow  
D H Lawrence**

Why does the thin grey strand  
Floating up from the forgotten  
Cigarette between my fingers,  
Why does it trouble me?

Ah, you will understand;      5  
When I carried my mother downstairs,  
A few times only, at the beginning  
Of her soft-foot malady,

I should find, for a reprimand  
To my gaiety, a few long grey hairs      10  
On the breast of my coat; and one by one  
I let them float up the dark chimney

**Morning Song**  
**Sylvia Plath**

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.  
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry  
Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.  
In a drafty museum, your nakedness 5  
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I'm no more your mother  
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow  
Effacement at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath 10  
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:  
A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral  
In my Victorian nightgown.  
Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square 15

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try  
Your handful of notes;  
The clear vowels rise like balloons.

**Horses on the Carmargue**  
**Roy Campbell**

In the grey wastes of dread,  
The haunt of shattered gulls where nothing moves  
But in a shroud of silence like the dead,  
I heard a sudden harmony of hooves,  
And, turning, saw afar 5  
A hundred snowy horses unconfined,  
The silver runaways of Neptune's car  
Racing, spray-curled, like waves before the wind.  
Sons of the Mistral, fleet  
As him with whose strong gusts they love to flee, 10  
Who shod the flying thunders on their feet  
And plumed them with the snortings of the sea;  
Theirs is no earthly breed  
Who only haunt the verges of the earth  
And only on the sea's salt herbage feed-- 15  
Surely the great white breakers gave them birth.  
For when for years a slave,  
A horse of the Camargue, in alien lands,  
Should catch some far-off fragrance of the wave  
Carried far inland from this native sands, 20  
Many have told the tale  
Of how in fury, foaming at the rein,  
He hurls his rider; and with lifted tail,  
With coal-red eyes and cataracting mane,  
Heading his course for home, 25  
Though sixty foreign leagues before him sweep,  
Will never rest until he breathes the foam  
And hears the native thunder of the deep.

But when the great gusts rise  
 And lash their anger on these arid coasts, 30  
 When the scared gulls career with mournful cries  
 And whirl across the waste like driven ghosts;  
 When hail and fire converge,  
 The only souls to which they strike no pain  
 Are the white crested fillies of the surge 35  
 And the white horses of the windy plain.  
 Then in their strength and pride  
 The stallions of the wilderness rejoice;  
 They feel their Master's trident in their side,  
 And high and shrill they answer to his voice. 40  
 With white tails smoking free,  
 Long streaming manes, and arching necks, they show  
 Their kinship to their sisters of the sea-  
 And forward hurl their thunderbolts of snow.  
 Still out of hardship bred, 45  
 Spirits of power and beauty and delight  
 Have ever on such frugal pasture fed  
 And loved to course with tempests through the night.

**Goodbye S.S.  
Spike Milligan**

Go away girl, go away  
 and let me pack my dreams  
 Now where did I put those yesteryears  
 made up with broken seams  
 Where shall I sweep the pieces 5  
 my God they still look new  
 There's a taxi waiting at the door  
 but there's only room for you

**Praise Song to the Elephant  
Credo Mutwa**

Be angry, angry one!  
 Be angry at the clouds and the mountains!  
 Be angry at the sky and the rivers!  
 Be angry at the sea and the trees!  
 You are the elephant! 5  
 You, whose loud trumpeting heralded the birth of the world  
 You, whose last trumpeting will herald the end of the world we know  
 Be angry, great elephant  
 You, who are hunted by those who fear you  
 You, who are sought by those who should respect you 10  
 You, whose tusks are the ploughs that showed our grandmothers the way  
 You, whose great feet pounded the earth, the hard earth into powder in  
 ancient times, so that green things might grow  
 Be angry, elephant, shout at the gods of Africa  
 Be angry, elephant, shout at the grey ghosts of our forefathers 15  
 Be angry, elephant, and shout at the people of modern days who do not  
 do anything to shield you from the murderer and the thief  
 Be angry elephant, shout at the land that no longer cares about living things

Be angry elephant, shout at the very stars themselves and demand from them justice  
 You are the lord of the trees 20  
 You are the master of the valleys  
 You are the great farmer who changes the land in which he lives  
 In your anger, you can dig up and cause the great marula trees to fall  
 In your anger, you can pierce the mighty baobab tree with one of your tusks  
 Great elephant, be at peace 25  
 Candle of the valleys  
 Herald of the dawn  
 King of creation  
 You, in whose mind shines the souls of murdered gods  
 Elephant, indlovu! 30  
 Elephant, bayete!  
 Elephant, shwele  
 Shwele, forgive the people who kill you, not knowing whom they kill  
 Who destroy you, not knowing whom they destroy  
 Who disrespect you, not knowing to whom they are speaking 35  
 Indlovu, elephant, servant of the great Earth Mother!  
 It is said that it was you upon whose back the great goddess rode when she was emerging from the  
 dungeons of the nether world  
 Elephant, if I had my way, you would rule the plains of Africa forever  
 Elephant, if I had my way, no weapon would ever be lifted against you  
 For you are sacred, indlovu 40  
 You are sacred, creature of creatures  
 The mighty rhinoceros bows before you  
 The great hippopotamus runs at the very sight of you, for you caught him on the river bank and he  
 retreated  
 And he sought safety in the water which is his mother  
 Not only did he seek safety in the water, oh elephant, 45  
 The hippopotamus dived into the very bowels of the river and walked under the water until he  
 emerged at the other side to escape your anger, great elephant  
 You are the protecting spirit of Africa  
 You are the whisper of our stories in the wind that has forgotten its heritage  
 You, whose trumpet saluted the first dawn  
 And you, whose trumpeting will also say farewell when the last evening ends, 50  
 Sawubona  
 Bayete, elephant! Animal of our kings  
 You, from whom the Zulus were proud to trace their ancestry  
 Wena wendlovu - you of the elephant - they said to their sovereigns  
 Sovereigns who were nothing but weak and mortal human beings 55  
 Wena wendlovu, they said to Shaka, son of the elephant, unconquerable striker  
 that cannot be struck  
 I salute you, elephant of the plains of Africa!  
 Wild, untamed and untameable one  
 Tamed only by the gods of time 60  
 Bayete!  
 UyiZulu, you are the thunder of the skies above  
 You are the trembling of the Earth below  
 You are the whispering of the streams and the rivers  
 And you are the song of the wind among the trees 65  
 You are the elephant, the greatest of your kind!  
 Bayete!

**Stars of Stone**  
**Rustum Kozain**

Today the stones I know will nick  
our skulls, then knock our souls  
from us. It is so. For under stars  
that are but burning stone,  
we held each other. Named for light, 5  
Nurbibi clung to me, her back  
against the flat roof of my house  
warding off earth, hanging  
under heaven. Face-down,  
I gripped her shoulders, smelled 10  
the stone roof through the rug.  
Nurbibi may have stared  
over my shoulder at the stars,  
those burning bits of far-off stone.

And she may have seen four men's eyes 15  
hanging above us in their own,  
unmoving flame. Eyes of stone,  
heads shrouded in swathes  
of scripture. So I, Turyalai,  
am bound. And on my knees. 20  
And Nurbibi, in whose loins I sought  
some God, is now almost at one  
with earth, buried to her waist  
next to me. We wait  
for the seekers of God 25  
and their ceremony of the stone.  
Men we do not know will come  
and let stone speak, first in whispers

then in what they must believe  
a chattering of angels 30  
when the crowd erupts and rocks arc  
but in parabolas far short  
of reaching God, that must return  
to earth. Men who do not know us.  
Men who cannot know 35  
that even as we wronged my wife,  
in union we created God. In come-cries  
caught in the throat, we made Him.  
And made Him ours, gave Him some voice  
even as He was in the still of night 40  
as He is now, inchoate  
before the hard and burning stars.

Note: Turyalai and Nurbibi were accused of adultery and stoned to death by the Taliban in November 1996.

**Butterfly**  
**Chinua Achebe**

Speed is violence  
Power is violence  
Weight is violence

The butterfly seeks safety in lightness  
In weightless, undulating flight 5

But at a crossroads where mottled light  
From trees falls on a brash new highway  
Our convergent territories meet

I come power-packed enough for two  
And the gentle butterfly offers 10  
Itself in bright yellow sacrifice  
Upon my hard silicon shield.

**From the Dark Tower**  
**Countee Cullen**

We shall not always plant while others reap  
The golden increment of bursting fruit,  
Not always countenance, abject and mute,  
That lesser men should hold their brothers  
cheap; 5

Not everlastingly while others sleep  
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,  
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;  
We were not made to eternally weep.  
The night whose sable breast relieves the  
stark, 10

White stars is no less lovely being dark,  
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all  
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;  
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,  
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds

**The Birth of Shaka**  
**Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali**

His baby cry  
was of a cub  
tearing the neck  
of the lioness  
because he was fatherless. 5

The gods  
boiled his blood  
in a clay pot of passion  
to course in his veins.

His heart was shaped into an ox shield 10  
to foil every foe.

Ancestors forged  
his muscles into  
thongs as tough  
as water bark 15  
and nerves  
as sharp as  
syringa thorns.

His eyes were lanterns  
that shone from the dark valleys of Zululand<sup>20</sup>  
to see white swallows  
coming across the sea.  
His cry to two assassin brothers:

"Lo! you can kill me  
but you'll never rule this land!" 25

**For Art's Sake**  
**Ogaga Ifowodo**

We shall shun pain  
and write lyrics of the ear.

We shall write only:

the redness of the setting sun  
on the wonders of a rolling sea 5

the greenness of the forest's trees  
and the songs of the dwelling birds

the sweetness of women's eyes  
and the adventures of stubborn love.

We shall roam the full earth 10  
and see no pain on our paths  
and no evil in men's hearts.

For art's sake, we shall shun  
pain, and write lyrics of the ear.



