

The Waking  
*Theodore Roethke*

I strolled across  
An open field;  
The sun was out;  
Heat was happy.

This way! This way!  
The wren's throat shimmered,  
Either to other  
The blossoms sang.

The stones sang,  
The little ones did,  
And flowers jumped  
Like small goats.

A ragged fringe  
Of daisies waved;  
I wasn't alone  
In a grove of apples.

Far in the wood  
A nestling sighed;  
The dew loosened  
Its morning smells.

I came where the river  
Ran over stones:  
My ears knew  
An early joy.

And all the waters  
Of all the streams  
Sang in my veins  
That summer day.

Contributed by Leanna Derrenbacher

If I Had But Two Little Wings  
*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

If I had but two little wings  
And were a little feathery bird,  
    To you I'd fly my dear!  
But thoughts like these are idle things  
    And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:  
I'm always with you in my sleep!  
    The world is all one's own.  
But then one wakes, and where am I?  
    All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:  
So I love to wake ere break of day:  
    For though my sleep will be gone,  
Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,  
    And still dreams on.

Contributed by Amber Stephens

For a Dead Kitten  
*Sara Henderson Hay*

Put the rubber mouse away,  
Pick the spools up from the floor,  
What was velvet-shod, and gay,  
Will not want them any more.

What was warm, is strangely cold.  
Whence dissolved the little breath?  
How could this small body hold  
So immense a thing as Death?

Contributed by Cheyenne DeMarco

Only One of My Deaths  
*Dean Young*

Because it seems the only way to save the roses  
is to pluck the Japanese beetles out of  
their convoluted paradise  
and kill them, I think for a moment,  
instead of crushing them in the driveway,  
of impaling them on the thorns.  
Perhaps they'd prefer that.

Contributed by Jesse James

Goofing Again  
*Gary Snyder*

Goofing again  
I shifted weight the wrong way  
flipping the plank end-over  
dumping me down in the bilge  
& splatting a gallon can  
of thick sticky dark red  
italian deck paint  
over the fresh white bulkhead.  
such a trifling move  
& such spectacular results.  
now I have to pain the wall again  
& salvage only from it all a poem.

Contributed by John Nesbitt

Too Blue  
*Langston Hughes*

I got those sad old weary blues.  
I don't know where to turn.  
I don't know where to go.  
Nobody cares about you  
When you sink so low.

What shall I do?  
What shall I say?  
Shall I take a gun and  
Put myself away?

I wonder if  
One bullet would do?  
Hard as my head is,  
It would probably take two.

But I ain't got  
Neither bullet nor gun –  
And I'm too blue  
To look for one.

Contributed by Michelle Mozzer

On Reading in the Morning Paper That Dreams  
My Be Only Nonsense  
*Billy Collins*

We might have guessed as much, given the nightly  
Absurdities, the extravagant circus of dark.  
You hit the pillow and moments later your mother  
Appears as a llama, shouting at you in another language.

Or you find yourself drowning in a sea of breasts,  
Or drowning in a sea of basketballs –  
Those who have attended night school might be quick  
To explain the difference.

Or the nonsense is just a scrambling of the day before,  
Everyone walking around the office stark naked,  
The elevator doors opening on to deep space,  
The clambshells from lunch floating by in slow motion.

Too bad Freud isn't here to hear this news,  
Maybe some pharaohs too, druids and wide-eyed diviners,  
All gathered around my kitchen table  
In their exotic clothes, their pale mouths moving  
Silently, as in a dream,

And me pouring coffee for everyone, proffering smokes,  
Pacing around in my bathrobe reading the paper out loud.

But the scene would soon swirl away  
And I would find myself alone in some fix,  
Screaming within the confines of an hourglass,  
Being driven to the opera by a blind chauffeur

Or waking up to the chilling evidence on the bedroom floor:  
A small pile of sand, a white bow tie.

Random Contribution by Miss James

The History Teacher  
*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.

Another random contribution courtesy of Miss James



Two Friends  
*David Ignatow*

I have something to tell you.  
I'm listening.  
I'm dying.  
I'm sorry to hear.  
I'm growing old.  
It's terrible.  
It is, I thought you should know.  
Of course I'm sorry. Keep in touch.  
I will and you too.  
And let me know what's new.  
Certainly, though it can't be much.  
And stay well.  
And you too.  
And go slow.  
And you too.

Contributed by Tom Miller