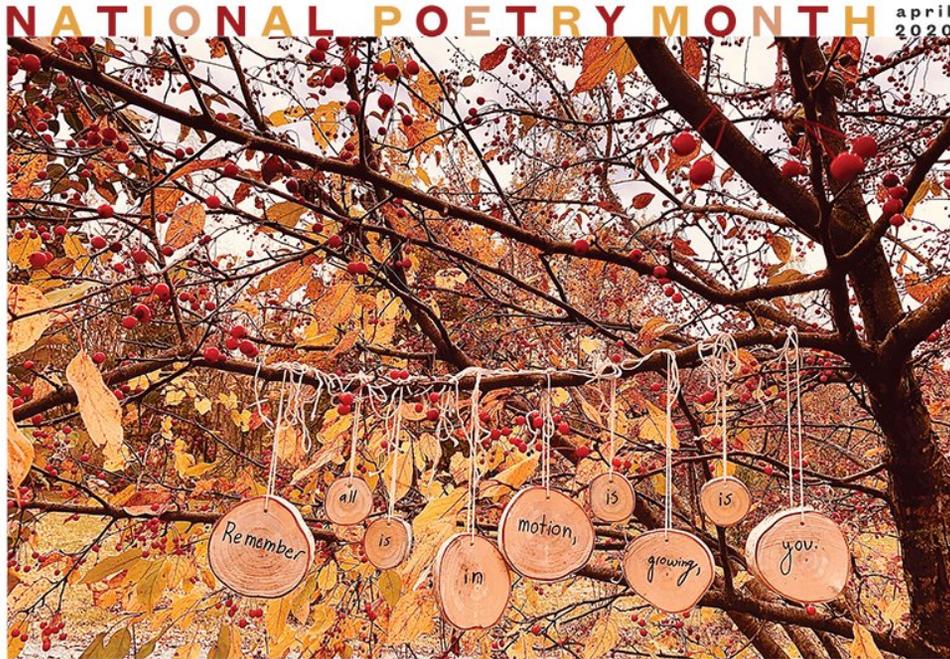


15th ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL POETRY MONTH



Artwork by Samantha Akman-Lisa excerpted from the poem "Remember" by Joy Harjo, from *She Had Some Horses* (W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981). For more free poetry resources, visit Poets.org/national-poetry-month.



MY FAVORITE POEM PROJECT

How it all began...

United States Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky began the Favorite Poem Project back in 1998. It was designed to bring communities together by celebrating, documenting and encouraging poetry's role in our lives. As a result, in small towns and cities across America, firemen, teachers, farmers, nurses, doctors, carpenters, plumbers, factory workers, children, policemen, vets, seniors, etc - poets and non-poets alike - come together every April to share their favorite poems.

Here's how it works...

This year, rather than staging a 2-hour event, we are asking you to send us your favorite poems by email to be posted on our website and Facebook pages. To submit a poem, send an email to director@rensselaervillelibrary.org. Include the title and poet's name, the text of the poem, and a short sentence or two about why you selected your poem. Each day in April, a Favorite Poem will be added below.

My Favorite Poem

Here's an Encore Poem with our thanks to all who participated in the 2020 My Favorite Poetry Project! May memories of the times "we were very merry" sustain us through these difficult days.

May 1, 2020
Submitted by Viviane Galloway

Recuerdo
By Edna St. Vincent Millay

We were very tired, we were very merry--
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable--
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry--
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
We hailed, "Good morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.

April 30, 2020
Judy Crilley, Youth Services Coordinator's Choice

The Voice
By Shel Silverstein

There is a voice inside of you
That whispers all day long,
"I feel that this is right for me,
I know that *this* is wrong."
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
Or wise man can decide
What's right for you--just listen to
The voice that speaks inside.

April 29, 2020
Paige Persak, Page's Choice

Calmly We Walk Through This April's Day
By Delmore Schwartz

Calmly we walk through this April's day,
Metropolitan poetry here and there,
In the park sit pauper and *rentier*,
The screaming children, the motor-car
Fugitive about us, running away,
Between the worker and the millionaire
Number provides all distances,
It is Nineteen Thirty-Seven now,
Many great dears are taken away,
What will become of you and me
(This is the school in which we learn ...)
Besides the photo and the memory?
(... that time is the fire in which we burn.)

(This is the school in which we learn ...)
What is the self amid this blaze?
What am I now that I was then
Which I shall suffer and act again,
The theodicy I wrote in my high school days
Restored all life from infancy,
The children shouting are bright as they run
(This is the school in which they learn ...)
Ravished entirely in their passing play!
(... that time is the fire in which they burn.)

Avid its rush, that reeling blaze!
Where is my father and Eleanor?
Not where are they now, dead seven years,
But what they were then?
 No more? No more?
From Nineteen-Fourteen to the present day,
Bert Spira and Rhoda consume, consume
Not where they are now (where are they now?)
But what they were then, both beautiful;

Each minute bursts in the burning room,
The great globe reels in the solar fire,
Spinning the trivial and unique away.
(How all things flash! How all things flare!)
What am I now that I was then?
May memory restore again and again
The smallest color of the smallest day:
Time is the school in which we learn,
Time is the fire in which we burn.

April 28, 2020

Laura Potter, Library Clerk's Choice

Mary Oliver always seems to have the words to keep me from cynicism. This poem in particular, has served a helpful reminder

to remain open to the seen and unseen worlds around and within each of us.

The World We Live In

By Mary Oliver

I have refused to live
locked in the orderly house of
reasons and proofs.
The world I live in and believe in
is wider than that. And anyway,
what's wrong with *Maybe*?

You wouldn't believe what once or
twice I have seen. I'll just
tell you this:
only if there are angels in your head will you
ever, possibly, see one.

April 27, 2020

Katie Caprio, Library Assistant's Choice

A poem with a little levity: Though it is of course hard to pick a favorite poem, I have always appreciated Ogden Nash for his lack of seriousness.

The Cat

By Ogden Nash

You get a wife, you get a house,
Eventually you get a mouse.
You get some words regarding mice,
You get a kitty in a trice.
By two A.M., or thereabout,
The mouse is in, the cat is out.
It dawns upon you, in your cot,
The mouse is silent, the cat is not.
Instead of Pussy, says your spouse,
You should have bought another mouse.

April 26, 2020

Heidi Carle, Library Director's Choice

For Arbor Day

Speaking Tree

By Joy Harjo

I had a beautiful dream I was dancing with a tree.

—Sandra Cisneros

Some things on this earth are unspeakable:
Genealogy of the broken--
A shy wind threading leaves after a massacre,

Or the smell of coffee and no one there--

Some humans say trees are not sentient beings,
But they do not understand poetry--

Nor can they hear the singing of trees when they are fed by
Wind, or water music--
Or hear their cries of anguish when they are broken and bereft--

Now I am a woman longing to be a tree, planted in a moist, dark earth
Between sunrise and sunset--

I cannot walk through all realms--
I carry a yearning I cannot bear alone in the dark--

What shall I do with all this heartache?

The deepest-rooted dream of a tree is to walk
Even just a little ways, from the place next to the doorway--
To the edge of the river of life, and drink--

I have heard trees talking, long after the sun has gone down:

Imagine what would it be like to dance close together
In this land of water and knowledge. . .

To drink deep what is undrinkable.

April 24, 2020
Submitted by Sharyn Smith
Written April 23, 2020; thinking of individual isolation in this time of pandemic.

Perceptions of Interior Space
by Sharyn Smith

Confined within a cramped interior space
Longing to get out and see the world
Explore, travel, find a different place

Walls are closing in
No place to go, staying home
Dreaming of a different life and not alone

April 23, 2020
Submitted by Tom Corrado

I got cranked up - yet, again, - over Walt Whitman after reading a review of a new book about Whitman titled "What Is the Grass: Walt Whitman in My Life" by the poet, Mark Doty, who begins by saying that he's "always felt haunted by Walt Whitman's bold, perennially new American voice, and by his equally radical claims about body and soul and what it means to be a self." There's just so much to Whitman - and most of it is wonderful! For the Favorite Poem Project, I thought I'd excerpt "Sun-

Down Poem” better known as “*Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*,” which is regarded by many as one the greatest poems ever written in English. Among other things, it speaks to our shared humanity:

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry (excerpt)

By Walt Whitman

I am with you, you men and women of a generation,
or ever so many generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river
and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail,
yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships
and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd . . .

April 22, 2020

Director's Choice

For Earth Day

On the Fifth Day

By Jane Hirshfield

On the fifth day
the scientists who studied the rivers
were forbidden to speak
or to study the rivers.

The scientists who studied the air
were told not to speak of the air,
and the ones who worked for the farmers
were silenced,
and the ones who worked for the bees.

Someone, from deep in the Badlands,
began posting facts.

The facts were told not to speak
and were taken away.
The facts, surprised to be taken, were silent.

Now it was only the rivers
that spoke of the rivers,
and only the wind that spoke of its bees,

while the unpausing factual buds of the fruit trees
continued to move toward their fruit.

The silence spoke loudly of silence,
and the rivers kept speaking

of rivers, of boulders and air.

Bound to gravity, earless and tongueless,
the untested rivers kept speaking.

Bus drivers, shelf stockers,
code writers, machinists, accountants,
lab techs, cellists kept speaking.

They spoke, the fifth day,
of silence.

—2017

April 21, 2020

Submitted by Carole Fults

I wrote this poem/story about my Mom and I'm submitting it in honor of her and of the dandelions blooming freshly in the yard.

Old Dell's Dandelion Wine

By Carole Fults

The neighbor lady came to Dell's door
on summer's hottest day.

Old Dell greeted her -

Come on inside and cool off.

He led her to the cellar
showed her the barrel of Dandelion Wine
gave her a glass
of the coldest, sweetest tasting thing
she'd ever had on her tongue,

and as they sat in the parlor and talked -
Old Dell, his wife, and this neighbor lady -

that cold stuff in the cellar
kept calling them
until, unable to stand without staggering,
the neighbor lady said she had to get home,
her husband would be expecting dinner.

Old Dell offered to drive her the half mile
but she declined
saying she needed the air.

Sixty years later
when she no longer required Dandelion Wine
to stagger
she recalled that far gone day
when, wobbling home across the across the pasture
she laughed

and stopped to pick Dandelions.

April 20, 2020

Submitted by Heather Kamin

The nights in the Helderberg hills are filled with the conversations of owls. I love this poem because of the owls, and also because it is such an effective reflection on the power of words. In this unusual April, when we must be solitary, poetry is bringing me the range of human experience.

A Barred Owl

By Richard Wilbur

The warping night air having brought the boom
Of an owl's voice into her darkened room,
We tell the wakened child that all she heard
Was an odd question from a forest bird,
Asking of us, if rightly listened to,
"Who cooks for you?" and then "Who cooks for you?"

Words, which can make our terrors bravely clear,
Can also thus domesticate a fear,
And send a small child back to sleep at night
Not listening for the sound of stealthy flight
Or dreaming of some small thing in a claw
Borne up to some dark branch and eaten raw.

April 19, 2020

Submitted by Marilyn McCabe

I just encountered this poem, sent by a friend. It seems poignantly relevant in these precarious times.

If You Knew

By Ellen Bass

What if you knew you'd be the last
to touch someone?
If you were taking tickets, for example,
at the theater, tearing them,
giving back the ragged stubs,
you might take care to touch that palm,
brush your fingertips
along the life line's crease.

When a man pulls his wheeled suitcase
too slowly through the airport, when
the car in front of me doesn't signal,
when the clerk at the pharmacy
won't say Thank you, I don't remember
they're going to die.

A friend told me she'd been with her aunt.

They'd just had lunch and the waiter,
a young gay man with plum black eyes,
joked as he served the coffee, kissed
her aunt's powdered cheek when they left.
Then they walked half a block and her aunt
dropped dead on the sidewalk.

How close does the dragon's spume
have to come? How wide does the crack
in heaven have to split?
What would people look like
if we could see them as they are,
soaked in honey, stung and swollen,
reckless, pinned against time?

April 18, 2020

Submitted by Jonathan Lloyd

Mr. Belitt taught at Bennington College for 50 years, and was a poet of great lyric density.

The Orange Tree

by Ben Belitt

To be
intact and unseen,
like the orange's scent
in the orange tree:

a pod of aroma
on the orange's ogive of green
or a phosphorous voice
in the storm of the forge and the hammer:

to climb up a ladder of leaven
and salt, and work in the lump
of the mass, upward and down
in the volatile oils of a wilderness heaven:

to sleep, like the karat,
in the void of the jeweler's glass,
yet strike with the weight of the diamond--
perhaps that is to live in the spirit.

So the orange tree
waits on its stump as the wood of its armature
multiplies: first, the branch, then the twig in the thicket
of leafage, then the sunburst of white in the leaves, the odor's epiphany.

All burns with a mineral
heat, all hones an invisible edge on the noonday, while the orange's scent
speaks from the tree in the tree to declare what the holocaust meant:
to be minimal,

minimal: to diminish excess, to pare it
as a child pares an orange, moving the knife through the peel
in a spiral's unbroken descent, till only the orange's sweat,
a bead of acidulous essence, divides the rind from the steel:

perhaps that is to live in the spirit.

April 17, 2020

Submitted by Edie Abrams

*I wouldn't say this poem is my favorite
or even one of my favorites. I can't
choose from among my loves.*

*However, like many poems
written over many years
that describe TRUTH*

*This poem, this poet
cuts to the bone
to describe then and now.*

my dream about time
By Lucille Clifton

a woman unlike myself is running
down the long hall of a lifeless house
with too many windows which open on
a world she has no language for,
running and running until she reaches
at last the one and only door
which she pulls open to find each wall
is faced with clocks and as she watches
all of the clocks strike

NO

April 16, 2020

Submitted by Mike Burke

I chose a poem by one of my favorites, David Budbill.

His poems are simple, direct and heavy with meaning.

The Woodcutter Changes His Mind delivers a message of a change of perspective, approach and attitude as the decades fly by.

The Woodcutter Changes His Mind
by David Budbill

When I was young, I cut the bigger, older
trees for firewood, the ones
with heart rot, dead and broken branches,
the crippled and deformed

ones, because, I reasoned, they were going
to fall soon anyway, and
therefore, I should give the younger trees
more light and room to grow.

Now I'm older and I cut the younger, strong
and sturdy solid
and beautiful trees, and I let the older ones
have a few more years

of light and water and leaf in the forest they
have known so long.
Soon enough they will be prostrate on the
ground.

April 15, 2020

Submitted by Howard J. Kogan

This poem is one of my favorites by Hardy for the heart and musical tone.

At the Railway Station, Upway

By Thomas Hardy

"There is not much that I can do,
For I've no money that's quite my own!"
Spoke up the pitying child--
A little boy with a violin
At the station before the train came in,--
"But I can play my fiddle to you,
And a nice one 'tis, and good in tone!"

The man in the handcuffs smiled;
The constable looked, and he smiled, too,
As the fiddle began to twang;
And the man in the handcuffs suddenly sang
Uproariously:
"This life so free
Is the thing for me!"
And the constable smiled, and said no word,
As if unconscious of what he heard;
And so they went on till the train came in --
The convict, and boy with the violin.

April 14, 2020

Submitted by Kathleen Rzant

WH Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts," because I was there and the tour guide taught us so much about this painting and how to see it. Soon after I came home, I happened upon this poem, accidentally and for the first time.

Musée des Beaux Arts

By W. H. Auden

About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

April 13, 2020

Submitted by Dennis Sullivan

For me the poem is a paean to hope, that in the midst of all the grime our gritty existence must face and suffer daily, there is a future worth striving toward. We're all golden sunflowers inside!

Sunflower Sutra

By Allen Ginsberg

I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and sat down under the huge shade of a Southern Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the box house hills and cry.

Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron pole, companion, we thought the same thoughts of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed, surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery.

The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun sank on top of final Frisco peaks, no fish in that stream, no hermit in those mounts, just ourselves rheumy-eyed and hung-over like old bums on the riverbank, tired and wily.

Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust--

—I rushed up enchanted—it was my first sunflower, memories of Blake—my visions—Harlem

and Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joes Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages, black treadless tires forgotten and unretreaded, the poem of the riverbank, condoms & pots, steel knives, nothing stainless, only the dank muck and the razor-sharp artifacts passing into the past--

and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset, crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and smog and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye--

corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its face, soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays obliterated on its hairy head like a dried wire spiderweb,

leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures from the sawdust root, broke pieces of plaster fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its ear,

Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!

The grime was no man's grime but death and human locomotives,

all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid of black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt—industrial—modern—all that civilization spotting your crazy golden crown-- and those bleak thoughts of death and dusty loveless eyes and ends and withered roots below, in the home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar bills, skin of machinery, the guts and innards of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely tincans with their rusty tongues alack, what more could I name, the smoked ashes of some cock cigar, the cunts of wheelbarrows and the milky breasts of cars, wornout asses out of chairs & sphincters of dynamos—all these entangled in your mummied roots—and you there standing before me in the sunset, all your glory in your form!

A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent lovely sunflower existence! a sweet natural eye to the new hip moon, woke up alive and excited grasping in the sunset shadow sunrise golden monthly breeze!

How many flies buzzed round you innocent of your grime, while you cursed the heavens of the railroad and your flower soul? Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a flower? when did you look at your skin and decide you were an impotent dirty old locomotive? the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and shade of a once powerful mad American locomotive?

You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!

And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive, forget me not!

So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck it at my side like a scepter, and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul too, and anyone who'll listen,

—We're not our skin of grime, we're not dread bleak dusty imageless locomotives, we're golden sunflowers inside, blessed by our own seed & hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our own eyes under the shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening sitdown vision.

Berkeley, 1955

April 12, 2020

Submitted by Thomas Bonville

BEATTITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek:
for they shall possess the land.

Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice:
for they shall have their fill.

Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart:
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

April 11, 2020

Submitted by Dianne Sefcik

Birdsong, 1993

By Rumi

Translated by Coleman Barks

The way of love is not
a subtle argument.

The door there
is devastation.

Birds make great sky-circles
of their freedom.
How do they learn it?

They fall, and falling,
they're given wings.

April 10, 2020

Submitted by Ann Lapinski

I selected [this poem] because of its humor and lightness which we all need in this time of anxiety.

To My Favorite 17-Year-Old High School Girl

By Billy Collins

Do you realize that if you had started
building the Parthenon on the day you were born,
you would be all done in only one more year?
Of course, you couldn't have done it alone,
so never mind, you're fine just as you are.
You're loved for just being yourself.
But did you know that at your age Judy Garland
was pulling down \$150,000 a picture,
Joan of Arc was leading the French army to victory,
and Blaise Pascal had cleaned up his room?
No wait, I mean he had invented the calculator.
Of course, there will be time for all that later in your life,
after you come out of your room
and begin to blossom, or at least pick up all your socks.
For some reason, I keep remembering that Lady Jane Grey
was Queen of England when she was only fifteen,
but then she was beheaded, so never mind her as a role model.
A few centuries later, when he was your age,
Franz Schubert was doing the dishes for his family
but that did not keep him from composing two symphonies,
four operas, and two complete Masses as a youngster.
But of course that was in Austria at the height
of romantic lyricism, not here in the suburbs of Cleveland.
Frankly, who cares if Annie Oakley was a crack shot at 15
or if Maria Callas debuted as Tosca at 17?
We think you are special just being you,
playing with your food and staring into space.
By the way, I lied about Schubert doing the dishes,
but that doesn't mean he never helped out around the house.

April 9, 2020

Submitted by Alan Catlin

...a poem by a fellow poet, and long time friend, David Chorlton, who is an artist and poet from Austria, by way of England, living in Arizona. His wife is a musician, a vocation that gives David special insights into classical music, insights he applies his artist's gift of precise imaging to, and his poet's gift of exciting use of language. The result, to me, is as arresting, as compelling and as fresh and wonderful as it was when I first read it some thirty five or so years ago.

Haydn's Skull Returning

By David Chorlton

The old idea was to check the skull
for skidmarks
where a melody had raced
out of the brain

seeking the nerve
that led down the spine
and through the tree of blood

into a hand
to write it down.
But the eyeholes were burnt
from long hours
at the candle

and the temple worn thin
by the window where it pressed
to let the music out.

Barely cold, the brain
was washed and measured
though it did not answer.
Its house returns

grinning to tell
the other bones how cold
those metal centimeters are

that measure secrets
and how dry air gives the skin
new fingers to hold the cheekbones with.

April 7, 2020

Submitted by Dan Wilcox

This is a poem that is embroidered on my memory, it is a prayer for poets.

Believe, Believe

by Bob Kaufman (1925 - 1986)

Believe in this. Young apple seeds,

In blue skies, radiating your breasts,
Not in blue-suited insects,
Infesting society's garments.

Believe in the swinging sounds of jazz,
Tearing the night into intricate shreds,
Putting it back together again,
In cool logical patterns,
Not in the sick controllers,
Who created only the Bomb.

Let the voices of dead poets
Ring louder in your ears
Than the screechings mouthed
In mildewed editorials,
Listen to the music of the centuries,
Rising above the mushroom time.

April 6, 2020

Submitted by Paige Persak

The Promise

By Jane Hirshfield

Stay, I said
to the cut flowers.
They bowed
their heads lower.

Stay, I said to the spider,
who fled.

Stay, leaf.
It reddened,
embarrassed for me and itself.

Stay, I said to my body.
It sat as a dog does,
obedient for a moment,
soon starting to tremble.

Stay, to the earth
of riverine valley meadows,
of fossiled escarpments,
of limestone and sandstone.
It looked back
with a changing expression, in silence.

Stay, I said to my loves.
Each answered,
Always.

April 5, 2020

Submitted by Katrinka Moore

Seems like a good time to read Ellen Bass: Relax.

Relax

By Ellen Bass

Bad things are going to happen.
Your tomatoes will grow a fungus
and your cat will get run over.
Someone will leave the bag with the ice cream
melting in the car and throw
your blue cashmere sweater in the drier.
Your husband will sleep
with a girl your daughter's age, her breasts spilling
out of her blouse. Or your wife
will remember she's a lesbian
and leave you for the woman next door. The other cat--
the one you never really liked--will contract a disease
that requires you to pry open its feverish mouth
every four hours. Your parents will die.
No matter how many vitamins you take,
how much Pilates, you'll lose your keys,
your hair and your memory. If your daughter
doesn't plug her heart
into every live socket she passes,
you'll come home to find your son has emptied
the refrigerator, dragged it to the curb,
and called the used appliance store for a pick up--drug money.
There's a Buddhist story of a woman chased by a tiger.
When she comes to a cliff, she sees a sturdy vine
and climbs half way down. But there's also a tiger below.
And two mice--one white, one black--scurry out
and begin to gnaw at the vine. At this point
she notices a wild strawberry growing from a crevice.
She looks up, down, at the mice.
Then she eats the strawberry.
So here's the view, the breeze, the pulse
in your throat. Your wallet will be stolen, you'll get fat,
slip on the bathroom tiles of a foreign hotel
and crack your hip. You'll be lonely.
Oh taste how sweet and tart
the red juice is, how the tiny seeds
crunch between your teeth.

April 4, 2020

Submitted by Philomena Moriarity

Crossing The Stream

By Philomena Moriarity

I am sharing this poem because its theme is very important right now. The theme is helping each other and being in community. During these stressful days we remember, we are all in this together supporting each other as we cross the stream of weeks in both isolation and connection.

Crossing the Stream

(for Kathleen, Jeannie, Grayson, Christiana, and Filipa)

We, six, hike the Boynton Canyon Trail
the earth paints its walls indigo. cobalt
rose and iron red using wind and water
brush stokes.

We breath the dust of the Hopis
and Navajos before us,
walking in the shadow of the towering rock,
Kochina Woman

The trail winds round and round
heart and lungs catch at each turn
in awe, crossing stone and log bridges
placed for our passage

Younger reaches to older, experienced
to novice. Eyes bending to see hand
touching hand -a tribe giving strength
to one and other

We move from one wobbling stone,
trembling and meeting another
faith of friend to friend
our steps become firmer, surer

We read that day of ancient Aspen groves
trees rushing underground to
aide another tree in distress
the power of community

We, who have been engaged
in the deep work of being ourselves
receive and give
not knowing which is which

We, six, hike the Boynton Canyon Trail
cross the clear, icy waters again and again
drinking in the soul medicine of color,
towering beauty and each other

April 3, 2020

Submitted by Linda Miller

This poem captures for me the way in which the natural world continues to be such a balm for me, especially during times of crisis. Those of us who live in the Hilltowns are fortunate to have both the Huyck Preserve and many miles of forests, wetlands, fields around us.

Sleeping in the Forest

by Mary Oliver

I thought the earth remembered me,
she took me back so tenderly,
arranging her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds.
I slept as never before, a stone on the river bed,
nothing between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated light as moths
among the branches of the perfect trees.
All night I heard the small kingdoms
breathing around me, the insects,
and the birds who do their work in the darkness.
All night I rose and fell, as if in water,
grappling with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.

April 2, 2020

Submitted by Tom Corrado

Alone

by Jack Gilbert

I never thought Michiko would come back
after she died. But if she did, I knew
it would be as a lady in a long white dress.
It is strange that she has returned
as somebody's Dalmatian. I meet
the man walking her on a leash
almost every week. He says good morning
and I stoop down to calm her. He said
once that she was never like that with
other people. Sometimes she is tethered
on the lawn when I go by. If nobody
is around, I sit on the grass. When she
finally quiets, she puts her head in my lap
and we watch each other's eyes as I whisper
in her soft ears. She cares nothing about
the mystery. She likes it best when
I touch her head and tell her small
things about my days and our friends.
That makes her happy the way it always did.

April 1, 2020

Submitted by Ellen Rook

[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in]

By E. E. Cummings

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 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)

April 2020

in Just-

By E.E. Cummings

Submitted by Heidi Carle, Library Director

A reminder of the whimsy of my childhood, when hopscotch and jump-rope filled my hours.

in Just-

spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee