**Poetry**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Author | Title | Marxism | Feminism | Aesthetics | Metaphor |
| Harrison | “On Not Being Milton” (1978). *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. 4th Ed. Ed. Ferguson *et al*. New York: Norton, 1996. 1764-1765. | Y |  | Y | Y |
| Langston HughesClaude Mckay | * “I, Too” (1925)
* “America” (1921)
 | YY |  | YY | YY |
| Adrienne Rich | * “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” (1951)
* “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” (1971) ***[Compare to Donne’s poem of same name?]***
* “Diving into the Wreck” (1973)
 | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Emily Dickinson*[C19 writer; be aware of the gap between writing and publication]* | * 569 (“I reckon – when I count at all – ”) (1862?; pub. 1929)
* 657 (“I dwell in Possibility – ”) (?)
* 613 (“They shut me up in Prose – ” (1862?; pub. 1935)
 | (Y)(Y) | YY | Y | Y |



**I, Too**

Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

|  |
| --- |
| **America** |
| Claude McKay  |
|  |
| Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,Stealing my breath of life, I will confessI love this cultured hell that tests my youth!Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,Giving me strength erect against her hate.Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,I stand within her walls with not a shredOf terror, malice, not a word of jeer.Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,And see her might and granite wonders there,Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand. (1921) |

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me,

"Eat in the kitchen,"

Then.

Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

(1925)

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**Diving into the Wreck**

Adrienne Rich

First having read the book of myths,

and loaded the camera,

and checked the edge of the knife-blade,

I put on

the body-armor of black rubber

the absurd flippers

the grave and awkward mask.

I am having to do this

not like Cousteau with his

assiduous team

aboard the sun-flooded schooner

but here alone.

There is a ladder.

The ladder is always there

hanging innocently

close to the side of the schooner.

We know what it is for,

we who have used it.

Otherwise

it is a piece of maritime floss

some sundry equipment.

I go down.

Rung after rung and still

the oxygen immerses me

the blue light

the clear atoms

of our human air.

I go down.

My flippers cripple me,

I crawl like an insect down the ladder

and there is no one

to tell me when the ocean

will begin.

First the air is blue and then

it is bluer and then green and then

black I am blacking out and yet

my mask is powerful

it pumps my blood with power

the sea is another story

the sea is not a question of power

I have to learn alone

to turn my body without force

in the deep element.

And now: it is easy to forget

what I came for

among so many who have always

lived here

swaying their crenellated fans

between the reefs

and besides

you breathe differently down here.

I came to explore the wreck.

The words are purposes.

The words are maps.

I came to see the damage that was done

and the treasures that prevail.

I stroke the beam of my lamp

slowly along the flank

of something more permanent

than fish or weed

the thing I came for:

the wreck and not the story of the wreck

the thing itself and not the myth

the drowned face always staring

toward the sun

the evidence of damage

worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty

the ribs of the disaster

curving their assertion

among the tentative haunters.

This is the place.

And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair

streams black, the merman in his armored body.

We circle silently

about the wreck

we dive into the hold.

I am she: I am he

whose drowned face sleeps with open eyes

whose breasts still bear the stress

whose silver, copper, vermeil cargo lies

obscurely inside barrels

half-wedged and left to rot

we are the half-destroyed instruments

that once held to a course

the water-eaten log

the fouled compass

We are, I am, you are

by cowardice or courage

the one who find our way

back to this scene

carrying a knife, a camera

a book of myths

in which

our names do not appear.

(1973)

**Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers**

Adrienne Rich

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,

Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.

They do not fear the men beneath the tree;

They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.

Aunt Jennifer's finger fluttering through her wool

Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.

**A Valediction Forbidding Mourning**

Adrienne Rich

My swirling wants.  Your frozen lips.
The grammar turned and attacked me.
Themes, written under duress.
Emptiness of the natations.

They gave me a drug that slowed the healing of wounds.

I want you to see this before I leave:
the experience of repetition as death
the gailure of criticism to locate the pain
the poster in the bus that said:
*my bleeding is under control.*

A red plant in a cemetery of plastic wreaths.

A last attempt: the language is a dialect called metaphor.
These images go unglossed: hair, glacier, flashlinght.
when I think of a landscape I am thinking of a time.
When I talk of taking a trip I mean forever.
I could say: those morntains have a meaning
but further than that I could not say.

To do something very common, in my own way.

(1971)

The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band

Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie

Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.

The tigers in the panel that she made

Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

(1951)

If they be two, they are two so                                          25
    As stiff twin compasses are two ;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
    To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
    Yet, when the other far doth roam,                                30
It leans, and hearkens after it,
    And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
    Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,                                    35
    And makes me end where I begun.

(Written 1611; pub. 1633)

**A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING.**John Donne

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
    And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
    "Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,                                       5
    No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;
'Twere profanation of our joys
    To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears ;
    Men reckon what it did, and meant ;                              10
But trepidation of the spheres,
    Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
    —Whose soul is sense—cannot admit
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove                                     15
    The thing which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
    That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assurèd of the mind,
    Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.                           20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
    Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
    Like gold to aery thinness beat.

**Emily Dickinson selection**

**657**

I dwell in Possibility --
A fairer House than Prose --
More numerous of Windows --
Superior -- for Doors --

Of Chambers as the Cedars --
Impregnable of Eye --
And for an Everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky --

**613**

They shut me up in Prose –

As when a little Girl

They put me in the Closet –

Because they liked me “still”   –

Still! Could themself have peeped –

And seen my Brain – go round –

They might as wise have lodged a Bird

For Treason – in the Pound –

Himself has but to will

And easy as a Star

Look down opon Captivity –

And laugh – No more have I –

1862/1935

Of Visitors -- the fairest --
For Occupation – This --
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise --

**569**

I reckon -- when I count it all --

First -- Poets -- Then the Sun --

Then Summer -- Then the Heaven of God --

And then -- the List is done --

But, looking back -- the First so seems

To Comprehend the Whole --

The Others look a needless Show --

So I write -- Poets -- All --

Their Summer -- lasts a Solid Year --

They can afford a Sun

The East -- would deem extravagant --

And if the Further Heaven --

Be Beautiful as they prepare

For Those who worship Them --

It is too difficult a Grace --

To justify the Dream –

1862/1929