

## **“Metaphors”**

Sylvia Plath

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,  
An elephant, a ponderous house,  
A melon strolling on two tendrils.  
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!  
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.  
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.  
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.  
I've eaten a bag of green apples,  
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

Sonnet - Billy Collins

All we need is fourteen lines, well, thirteen now,  
and after this one just a dozen  
to launch a little ship on love's storm-tossed seas,  
then only ten more left like rows of beans.  
How easily it goes unless you get Elizabethan  
and insist the iambic bongos must be played  
and rhymes positioned at the ends of lines,  
one for every station of the cross.  
But hang on here wile we make the turn  
into the final six where all will be resolved,  
where longing and heartache will find an end,  
where Laura will tell Petrarch to put down his pen,  
take off those crazy medieval tights,  
blow out the lights, and come at last to bed.

## Shawl

By Albert Goldbarth b. 1948 Albert Goldbarth

Eight hours by bus, and night  
was on them. He could see himself now  
in the window, see his head there with the country  
running through it like a long thought made of steel and wheat.  
Darkness outside; darkness in the bus — as if the sea  
were dark and the belly of the whale were dark to match it.  
He was twenty: of course his eyes returned, repeatedly,  
to the knee of the woman two rows up: positioned so  
occasional headlights struck it into life.  
But more reliable was the book; he was discovering himself  
to be among the tribe that reads. Now his, the only  
overhead turned on. Now nothing else existed:  
only him, and the book, and the light thrown over his shoulders  
as luxuriously as a cashmere shawl.

### **“Incendiary”**

Vernon Scannell

That one small boy with a face like pallid cheese  
And burnt-out little eyes could make a blaze  
As brazen, fierce and huge, as red and gold  
And zany yellow as the one that spoiled  
Three thousand guineas' worth of property  
And crops at Godwin's Farm on Saturday  
Is frightening---as fact and metaphor:  
An ordinary match intended for  
The lighting of a pipe or kitchen fire  
Misused may set a whole menagerie  
Of flame-fanged tigers roaring hungrily.  
And frightening, too, that one small boy should set  
The sky on fire and choke the stars to heat  
Such skinny limbs and such a little heart  
Which would have been content with one warm kiss  
Had there been anyone to offer this.

### **“Daddy”**

by: Sylvia Plath

You do not do, you do not do  
Any more, black shoe  
In which I have lived like a foot  
For thirty years, poor and white,  
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.  
You died before I had time--  
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,  
Ghastly statue with one gray toe  
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic  
Where it pours bean green over blue  
In the waters off beautiful Nauset.  
I used to pray to recover you.  
Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town  
Scraped flat by the roller  
Of wars, wars, wars.  
But the name of the town is common.  
My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.  
So I never could tell where you  
Put your foot, your root,  
I never could talk to you.  
The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.  
Ich, ich, ich, ich,  
I could hardly speak.  
I thought every German was you.  
And the language obscene

An engine, an engine  
Chuffing me off like a Jew.  
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.  
I began to talk like a Jew.  
I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna  
Are not very pure or true.  
With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck  
And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack  
I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been scared of you,  
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledegoo.  
And your neat mustache  
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.  
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You--

Not God but a swastika  
So black no sky could squeak through.  
Every woman adores a Fascist,  
The boot in the face, the brute  
Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,  
In the picture I have of you,  
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot  
But no less a devil for that, no not  
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.  
I was ten when they buried you.  
At twenty I tried to die  
And get back, back, back to you.  
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,  
And they stuck me together with glue.  
And then I knew what to do.  
I made a model of you,  
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.  
And I said I do, I do.  
So daddy, I'm finally through.  
The black telephone's off at the root,  
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two--  
The vampire who said he was you  
And drank my blood for a year,  
Seven years, if you want to know.  
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart  
And the villagers never liked you.  
They are dancing and stamping on you.  
They always knew it was you.  
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

### **“Barbie Doll”**

Marge Piercy

This girlchild was born as usual  
and presented dolls that did pee-pee  
and miniature GE stoves and irons  
and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy.  
Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:  
You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,  
possessed strong arms and back,  
abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity.  
She went to and fro apologizing.  
Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.

She was advised to play coy,  
exhorted to come on hearty,  
exercise, diet, smile and wheedle.  
Her good nature wore out  
like a fan belt.  
So she cut off her nose and her legs  
and offered them up.

In the casket displayed on satin she lay  
with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,  
a turned-up putty nose,  
dressed in a pink and white nightie.  
Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.  
Consummation at last.  
To every woman a happy ending.

**"But He Was Cool, or: he even stopped for green lights"**

Don Lee

super-cool  
ultrablack  
a tan/purple  
had a beautiful shade.

he had a double-natural  
that wd put the sisters to shame.  
His dashikis were tailor made  
&his beads were imported sea shells

(from some blk/country i never heard of)

he was triple-hip.

his tikis were hand carved  
out of ivory  
&came express from the motherland.  
he would greet u in swahili  
&say good-by in yoruba.  
wooooooooooooo-jim he bes so cool &ill tel li gent

cool-cool is so cool he was un-cooled by other niggers' cool  
cool-cool ultracool was bop-cool/ice box cool so cool cold cool  
his wine didn't have to be cooled, him was air conditioned cool  
cool-cool/real cool made me cool--now ain't that cool  
cool-cool so cool him nick-named refrigerator.

cool-cool so cool  
he didn't know,  
after detroit, newark, chicago &c.,  
we had to hip

cool-cool/ super-cool/ real cool  
that

to be black  
is  
to be  
very-hot.

**"next to of course god america I"**

e. e. cummings

"next to of course god america i  
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh  
say can you see by the dawn's early my  
country 'tis of centuries come and go  
and are no more what of it we should worry  
in every language even deafanddumb  
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry  
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum  
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-  
iful than these heroic happy dead  
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
they did not stop to think they died instead  
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:  
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.

William Shakespeare - Sonnet #18

Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And Summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And oft' is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:  
But thy eternal Summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.  
Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?  
Who says you're like one of the dog days?  
You're nicer. And better.  
Even in May, the weather can be gray,  
And a summer sub-let doesn't last forever.  
Sometimes the sun's too hot;  
Sometimes it's not.  
Who can stay young forever?  
People break their necks or just drop dead!  
But you? Never!  
If there's just one condensed reader left  
Who can figure out the abridged alphabet,  
After you're dead and gone,  
In this poem you'll live on!

--- Howard Moss

### Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

### “Living in Sin”

Adrienne Rich

She had thought the studio would keep itself;  
no dust upon the furniture of love.  
Half heresy, to wish the taps less vocal,  
the panes relieved of grime. A plate of pears,  
a piano with a Persian shawl, a cat  
stalking the picturesque amusing mouse  
had risen at his urging.  
Not that at five each separate stair would writhe  
under the milkman's tramp; that morning light  
so coldly would delineate the scraps  
of last night's cheese and three sepulchral bottles;  
that on the kitchen shelf among the saucers  
a pair of beetle-eyes would fix her own---  
envoy from some village in the moldings . . .  
Meanwhile, he, with a yawn,  
sounded a dozen notes upon the keyboard,  
declared it out of tune, shrugged at the mirror,  
rubbed at his beard, went out for cigarettes;  
while she, jeered by the minor demons,  
pulled back the sheets and made the bed and found  
a towel to dust the table-top,  
and let the coffee-pot boil over on the stove.  
By evening she was back in love again,  
though not so wholly but throughout the night  
she woke sometimes to feel the daylight coming  
like a relentless milkman up the stairs.

**“ in Just- “**  
e.e. cummings

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

e.e. cummings