

1. [Loveliest of Trees, A.E. Houseman](#)

LOVELIEST of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten, 5
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room, 10
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

2. [Going and Staying, Thomas Hardy](#)

THE moving sun-shapes on the spray,
The sparkles where the brook was flowing,
Pink faces, plightings, moonlit May,—
These were the things we wished would stay;
But they were going. 5

Seasons of blankness as of snow,
The silent bleed of a world decaying,
The moan of multitudes in woe,—
These were the things we wished would go;
But they were staying. 10

3. [*So Here I Stand, Malala Yousafzai](#)

Title of Poem:Speech to the United Nations Youth Takeover, July 2013

Poet:Malala Yousafzai

7th form students should choose ONLY ONE of the following two excerpts for their recitation.

Excerpt 1

So here I stand...one girl among many.I speak – not for myself, but for all girls and boys.

I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.

Those who have fought for their rights:

- Their right to live in peace.
- Their right to be treated with dignity.
- Their right to equality of opportunity.
- Their right to be educated.

Excerpt 2

Dear Friends, on the 9th of October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends too. They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed. And then, out of that silence came, thousands of voices. The terrorists thought that they would change our aims and stop our ambitions but nothing changed in my life except this: Weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage was born. I am the same Malala. My ambitions are the same. My hopes are the same. My dreams are the same.

4. [Complication, Misti L. Green](#)

In a world filled with changes
each and every day,

I feel I'm being judged
for what I do and say.

I remember back to Barbies
and play days at the park,

When I didn't worry about
other people's remarks.

Now looking in the mirror,
I see, to my surprise,

A completely different person
staring in my eyes..

The carefree little girl
I saw at 4 and 5

Is now becoming a teen
Just trying to survive.

5. [The Little Boy and the Old Man, Shel Silverstein](#)

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."
Said the old man, "I do that too."
The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."
"I do that too," laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, "I often cry."
The old man nodded, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems
Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

6. [Have you Earned your Tomorrow, Edgar Guest](#)

Is anybody happier because you passed his way?
Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today?
This day is almost over, and its toiling time is through;

Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word of you?

Did you give a cheerful greeting to the friend who came along?

Or a churlish sort of "Howdy" and then vanish in the throng?

Were you selfish pure and simple as you rushed along the way,

Or is someone mighty grateful for a deed you did today?

Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping fast,

That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said;

Does a man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead?

Did you waste the day, or lose it, was it well or sorely spent?

Did you leave a trail of kindness or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes in slumber do you think that God would say,

You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today?

8th Form

1. [*Freedom or Death, Emmeline Pankhurst](#)

Excerpt

You have two babies very hungry and wanting to be fed. One baby is a patient baby, and waits indefinitely until its mother is ready to feed it. The other baby is an impatient baby and cries lustily, screams and kicks and makes everybody unpleasant until it is fed. Well, we know perfectly well which baby is attended to first. That is the whole history of politics. You have to make more noise than

anybody else, you have to make yourself more obtrusive than anybody else, you have to fill all the papers more than anybody else, in fact you have to be there all the time and see that they do not snow you under.

2. [Advice from a caterpillar, Rachel Rooney](#)

When I was egg, I too, clung onto leaf
in shaded safety, hidden underside.
And fastened by a pinprick of belief
I dared to dream I was a butterfly.

A hunger hatched. I ate the home I knew
then inched along the disappearing green.
In shedding every skin that I outgrew,
became a hundred times the size I'd been.

And now I'm spinning silk to fix my spot.
Outside remains. Inside I'm changing things.
This caterpillar's planning on the lot;
proboscis and antennae, four bright wings.

So keep on clinging on, my ovoid one.
For who you are has only just begun.

3. [The Trees, Philip Larkin](#)

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too.
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

4. [Snow Fox, Liz Brownlee](#)

In the Arctic summer
the cloud-grey fox
listens for prey
in the low shrubs and rocks

grizzled and still
as the permafrost ground
his senses vivid
with scent and sound

when lemmings are hidden
under the snow
the wild geese are flown
and biting winds blow

a horizon-less white
shrouds the Arctic fox
in clouds of snow fur
from tail-tip to socks

he haunts frozen sea
as thin as the air
hoping for scraps
missed by polar bear

or curls in his tail
from the star-cold white
chewing on hunger
through long Arctic night

and waits for spring sun
and pale Arctic day
to melt tundra snow
and his white coat away

5. [Housekeeping, Natasha Tretheway](#)

We mourn the broken things, chair legs
wrenched from their seats, chipped plates,
the threadbare clothes. We work the magic
of glue, drive the nails, mend the holes.
We save what we can, melt small pieces
of soap, gather fallen pecans, keep neck bones
for soup. Beating rugs against the house,
we watch dust, lit like stars, spreading
across the yard. Late afternoon, we draw
the blinds to cool the rooms, drive the bugs
out. My mother irons, singing, lost in reverie.
I mark the pages of a mail-order catalog,
listen for passing cars. All day we watch
for the mail, some news from a distant place.

6. [Amor Fati, Jane Hirshfield](#)

Little soul,
you have wandered
lost a long time.
The woods all dark now,

birded and eyed.

Then a light, a cabin, a fire, a door standing open.

The fairy tales warn you:

Do not go in,

you who would eat will be eaten.

You go in. You quicken.

You want to have feet.

You want to have eyes.

You want to have fears.

9th Form

1. [Hope is Not Lost, Jessica Millsaps](#)

When the desperation hit

When the people cried in the streets

When everything felt at loss

Hope stayed, even though fleeing would be easier

When the eyes were full of tears.

When kids and families were torn apart

By that last desperate grasp

Hope tried

When all else gave up

When all else backed off

When people lost all they had

Hope flew

When they cried

When the world was shocked with desperation and despair

When nothing seemed good
Hope worked

When those four planes crashed
When the buildings fell
When the lives were lost
Hope was there

Hope was only a tiny glimmer
Hope was still there
She ran to those who needed her
She worked to help

When all else failed
Hope didn't
She flew through us all
Letting us know, we still had her
We just needed to look hard enough

Hope was there
Hope remembers

2. [*They Go Low, We Go High, Michelle Obama](#)

Excerpt from speech: I also told you about our daughters, how they are the heart of our hearts, the center of our world. And during our time in the White House, we've had the joy of watching them grow from bubbly little girls into poised young women, a journey that started soon after we arrived in Washington...

I realized that our time in the White House would form the foundation for who they would become and how well we managed this experience could truly make or break them...

How we explain that when someone is cruel or acts like a bully, you don't stoop to their level. No, our motto is, when they go low, we go high.

3. [The Time Has Come, Lonnie Wilson / Susan Longacre](#)

The time has come to part, my love,
I must go away
I leave you now, my darling girl,
No longer can I stay.

My heart like yours is breaking
Together we'll prove strong
The road I take will show the world
The suffering that goes on.

The gentle clasp that holds my hand
Must loosen and let go
Please help me through the door
Though instinct tells you no.

Our vow it is eternal
And will bring you dreadful pain
But if our demands aren't recognised
Don't call me back again.

How their sorrow touched us all
In those final days
When it was the time she held the door
And touched his sallow face.

The flame he lit by leaving
Is still burning strong
By the lights it's plain to see
The suffering still goes on.

The time has come to part, my love
I must go away
I leave you now, my darling girl,
No longer can I stay

4. [Spring, Edna St. Vincent Millay](#)

To what purpose, April, do you return again?

Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of the crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing,
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

5. [Prayer for My Immigrant Relatives, Lory Bedikian](#)

While they wait in long lines, legs shifting,
fingers growing tired of holding handrails,
pages of paperwork, give them patience.
Help them to recall the cobalt Mediterranean
or the green valleys full of vineyards and sheep.

When peoples' words resemble the buzz
of beehives, help them to hear the music
of home, sung from balconies overflowing
with woven rugs and bundled vegetables.
At night, when the worry beads are held
in one palm and a cigarette lit in the other,
give them the memory of their first step
onto solid land, after much ocean, air and clouds,
remind them of the phone call back home saying,
We arrived. Yes, thank God we made it, we are here.

6. [Baby Ate A Microchip, Neal Levin](#)

Baby ate a microchip,
Then grabbed a bottle, took a sip.
He swallowed it and made a beep,
And now he's thinking pretty deep.

He's downloading his ABCs
And calculating 1-2-3s.
He's memorizing useless facts
While doing Daddy's income tax.

He's processing, and now he thrives
On feeding his internal drives.
He's throwing fits, and now he fights
With ruthless bits and toothless bytes.

He must be feeling very smug.

But hold on, Baby caught a bug.
Attempting to reboot in haste,
He accidentally got erased!

10th Form

1. [Funeral Blues, WH Auden](#)

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone.
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling in the sky the message He is Dead,
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever, I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,

Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

2. [Our Deepest Fear, Marianna Williamson](#)

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

3. [Becoming, Titilope Sonuga](#)

When the world unravels before you
and even your dreams are crumbling stones
when everything you dare to touch
is set on fire
and all around you is ash and smoke
remember this

rock bottom
is a perfect place for rebuilding
Remember that you are your mother's daughter
your grandmothers answered prayers
a whole bloodline of women who bend

in response to raging winds
there is nothing broken here
nothing damaged or discarded
each scar is a badge of honor
every misstep is a victory dance
waiting to happen

You are a woman becoming
learning the complicated language
of forgiveness
the intricate lessons of the universe

Your heart is just a muscle
it needs exercise
and you were born for this sort of heavy lifting
you were born one part saint
one part warrior woman

Loving yourself without shame
is the most important thing
you will ever have to fight for

4. [A Child is Something Else Again, Yehuda Amichal](#)

A child is something else again. Wakes up
in the afternoon and in an instant he's full of words,
in an instant he's humming, in an instant warm,
instant light, instant darkness.

A child is Job. They've already placed their bets on him

but he doesn't know it. He scratches his body
for pleasure. Nothing hurts yet.
They're training him to be a polite Job,
to say "Thank you" when the Lord has given,
to say "You're welcome" when the Lord has taken away.

A child is vengeance.

A child is a missile into the coming generations.

I launched him: I'm still trembling.

A child is something else again: on a rainy spring day
glimpsing the Garden of Eden through the fence,
kissing him in his sleep,
hearing footsteps in the wet pine needles.

A child delivers you from death.

Child, Garden, Rain, Fate.

5. [Kindness, Naomi Shihab Nye](#)

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.

What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.

How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.

You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.

You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

6. [Ozymandias, Percy Bysshe Shelley](#)

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

7. [*Speech about Challenger, President Ronald Reagan](#)

Excerpt from speech:

And I want to say something to the schoolchildren of America who were watching the live coverage of the shuttle's takeoff. I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them.

I've always had great faith in and respect for our space program, and what happened today does nothing to diminish it. We don't hide our space program. We don't keep secrets and cover things up. We do it all up front and in public. That's the way freedom is, and we wouldn't change it for a minute...

... The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and "slipped the surly bonds of earth" to "touch the face of God."

11th Form

1. [The Call, Charlotte Mew](#)

From our low seat beside the fire

Where we have dozed and dreamed and watched the glow
Or raked the ashes, stopping so
We scarcely saw the sun or rain
Above, or looked much higher
Than this same quiet red or burned-out fire.
To-night we heard a call,
A rattle on the window-pane,
A voice on the sharp air,
And felt a breath stirring our hair,
A flame within us: Something swift and tall
Swept in and out and that was all.
Was it a bright or a dark angel? Who can know?
It left no mark upon the snow,
But suddenly it snapped the chain
Unbarred, flung wide the door
Which will not shut again;
And so we cannot sit here any more.

We must arise and go:
The world is cold without
And dark and hedged about
With mystery and enmity and doubt,
But we must go
Though yet we do not know

Who called, or what marks we shall leave upon the snow.

2. [Hope is a Tattered Flag, Carl Sandburg](#)

Hope is a tattered flag and a dream of time.
Hope is a heartspun word, the rainbow, the shadblow in white
The evening star inviolable over the coal mines,
The shimmer of northern lights across a bitter winter night,
The blue hills beyond the smoke of the steel works,
The birds who go on singing to their mates in peace, war, peace,
The ten-cent crocus bulb blooming in a used-car salesroom,
The horseshoe over the door, the luckpiece in the pocket,
The kiss and the comforting laugh and resolve—
Hope is an echo, hope ties itself yonder, yonder.
The spring grass showing itself where least expected,
The rolling fluff of white clouds on a changeable sky,
The broadcast of strings from Japan, bells from Moscow,
Of the voice of the prime minister of Sweden carried
Across the sea in behalf of a world family of nations
And children singing chorals of the Christ child
And Bach being broadcast from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
And tall skyscrapers practically empty of tenants
And the hands of strong men groping for handholds
And the Salvation Army singing God loves us....

3. [The Republic of Poetry, Martin Espada](#)

In the republic of poetry,
a train full of poets

rolls south in the rain
as plum trees rock
and horses kick the air,
and village bands
parade down the aisle
with trumpets, with bowler hats,
followed by the president
of the republic,
shaking every hand.

In the republic of poetry,
monks print verses about the night
on boxes of monastery chocolate,
kitchens in restaurants
use odes for recipes
from eel to artichoke,
and poets eat for free.

In the republic of poetry,
poets read to the baboons
at the zoo, and all the primates,
poets and baboons alike, scream for joy.

In the republic of poetry,
poets rent a helicopter
to bombard the national palace
with poems on bookmarks,
and everyone in the courtyard
rushes to grab a poem
fluttering from the sky,
blinded by weeping.

In the republic of poetry,
the guard at the airport
will not allow you to leave the country
until you declaim a poem for her
and she says *Ah! Beautiful.*

4. [Rites, Wendy Chen](#)

Grandma wondered as I cut her hair
if I would mourn her when she died.

On the television, a discordant chorus
of weeping girls
crowded around a white,
maternal sheet.

She doesn't believe in the afterlife,
only the proper rites.

Mother thinks we will be born again.
She does not wish to linger
in ceremonies, the grave.
She says that we will
meet again.

But Yama, receiving souls of the dead
in his judgment hall,
says we must forget
our past lives.

He measures out
the punishment that is our due:
twenty, forty, maybe
a hundred years
of weeping
is needed before we can be
colorless and new.

Grandma emerges from the shower.
By now the girls have quieted. A man
is selling scissors.

I dry her with the towel. First her hair,
dove grey with strands of white.
Her neck, her shoulders and their brown
diabetic patches. Her spine,
its milky yellow curve and, at the base,
one faded purple mole.

She lifts one breast and then the other
for me to dry. They have stretched over the years
to her stomach, the skin thinner
than rice paper.

The long veins
in each breast
are blue,
a surfacing blue
so clear it will take more
than a hundred years to forget.

5. [I See you in the Field of my Mind Little Moo Cow, Matthew Siegel](#)

Your look makes me want to jump off the roof
of the modern art museum. How am I supposed
to tell you about my life? Yesterday I saw a turtle
eat a dandelion flower up close. I cannot say what
this might mean to you. It was on my phone,
which is where I've been living lately. I can't expect
you to understand. I cry openly and you stare at me
with big wet cow-eyes. I tell you what the abyss is like.
I heard breathing. It was my own. I wasn't terrified.
Loneliness binds me to myself but I use my phone
as a wedge, use it to keep myself from touching who
I am. Nobody wants to grow up, not even children.
They just want to be taller because they hate being
looked down upon. What is it we see when we turn
and look back? Salt? Pepper? I'll take both. No more
questions. All I want is to sit in this field with you,
little cow, this field I built in my mind. I pet you, make
little noises. You try to move away but I hold on to you,
I throw my arms around your neck. You drop
your dark head, continue chewing what you chew.

6. [*We Shall Fight on the Beaches, Winston Churchill](#)

Excerpt:

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government-every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

12th Form

1. [Let Me Die A Youngman's Death, Roger McGough](#)

Let me die a youngman's death
not a clean and inbetween
the sheets holywater death
not a famous-last-words
peaceful out of breath death

When I'm 73
and in constant good tumour
may I be mown down at dawn
by a bright red sports car

on my way home
from an allnight party

Or when I'm 91
with silver hair
and sitting in a barber's chair
may rival gangsters
with hamfisted tommyguns burst in
and give me a short back and insides

Or when I'm 104
and banned from the Cavern
may my mistress
catching me in bed with her daughter
and fearing for her son
cut me up into little pieces
and throw away every piece but one

Let me die a youngman's death
not a free from sin tiptoe in
candle wax and waning death
not a curtains drawn by angels borne
'what a nice way to go' death

2. [The Birthday of the Year, Marge Piercy](#)

On the birthday of the world
I begin to contemplate
what I have done and left
undone, but this year
not so much rebuilding

of my perennially damaged

psyche, shoring up eroding
friendships, digging out
stumps of old resentments
that refuse to rot on their own.

No, this year I want to call
myself to task for what
I have done and not done
for peace. How much have
I dared in opposition?

How much have I put
on the line for freedom?
For mine and others?
As these freedoms are pared,
sliced and diced, where

have I spoken out? Who
have I tried to move? In
this holy season, I stand
self-convicted of sloth
in a time when lies choke

the mind and rhetoric

bends reason to slithering
choking pythons. Here
I stand before the gates
opening, the fire dazzling

my eyes, and as I approach
what judges me, I judge
myself. Give me weapons
of minute destruction. Let
my words turn into sparks.

3. [*I have a Dream, Martin Luther King](#)

Excerpt:

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that; let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

4. [Revolution, Anne Waldman](#)

Spooky summer on the horizon I'm gazing at

from my window into the streets

That's where it's going to be where everyone is

walking around, looking around out in the open

suspecting each other's heart to open fire

all over the streets

like streets you read about every day

who are the network we travel through on the way to the center
which is energy filling life
and bursting with joy all over the screen

I can't sit still any longer!

I want to go where I'm not feeling so bad
Get off this little island before the bridges break
(my heart is a sore thing too)

No I want to sit in the middle watching movies
then go to bed in my head

Someone is banging on it with a heavy stick like the enemy
who is he going to be turns into a face you can't recognize
then vanishes behind a window behind a gun

Like the lonely hero stalking the main street
cries out Where are you? I just want to know
all the angles of death possible under the American sky!

I can hardly see for all the buildings polluting the sky
until it changes into a barrage of bottles
then clears up for a second while you breathe
and you realize you'e still as alive as ever and want to be
but would like to be somewhere else perhaps Africa
Start all over again as the race gets darker and darker
and the world goes on the way I always thought it would

For the winner is someone we recognize out of our collective past
which is turning over again in the grave

It is so important when one dies you replace her
and never waste a minute

5. [Forgetfulness, Billy Collins](#)

The name of the author is the first to go
followed obediently by the title, the plot,
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel
which suddenly becomes one you have never read,
never even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain,
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses goodbye
and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,
something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue,
not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river
whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall,
well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted
out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

6. [Things We Carry on the Sea, Wang Ping](#)

We carry tears in our eyes: good-bye father, good-bye mother
We carry soil in small bags: may home never fade in our hearts
We carry names, stories, memories of our villages, fields, boats
We carry scars from proxy wars of greed
We carry carnage of mining, droughts, floods, genocides
We carry dust of our families and neighbors incinerated in mushroom clouds
We carry our islands sinking under the sea
We carry our hands, feet, bones, hearts and best minds for a new life

We carry diplomas: medicine, engineer, nurse, education, math, poetry, even if they mean nothing to the other shore

We carry railroads, plantations, laundromats, bodegas, taco trucks, farms, factories, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, temples...built on our ancestors' backs

We carry old homes along the spine, new dreams in our chests

We carry yesterday, today and tomorrow

We're orphans of the wars forced upon us

We're refugees of the sea rising from industrial wastes

And we carry our mother tongues

爱(ai), حب (hubb), ליבע (libe), amor, love

平安 (ping'an), سلام (salaam), shalom, paz, peace

希望 (xi'wang), أمل ('amal), hofenung, esperanza, hope, hope, hope

As we drift...in our rubber boats...from shore...to shore...to shore...