**I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD** by William Wordsworth

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay: 10

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay,

In such a jocund company:

I gazed--and gazed--but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood, 20

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils.

**There Will Come Soft Rains**

Sara Teasdale

(War Time)

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,

And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,

And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire

Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one

Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree

If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,

Would scarcely know that we were gone.

**The Summer I Was Sixteen**

Geraldine Connolly

The turquoise pool rose up to meet us,

its slide a silver afterthought down which

we plunged, screaming, into a mirage of bubbles.

We did not exist beyond the gaze of a boy.

Shaking water off our limbs, we lifted

up from ladder rungs across the fern-cool

lip of rim. Afternoon. Oiled and sated,

we sunbathed, rose and paraded the concrete,

danced to the low beat of "Duke of Earl".

Past cherry colas, hot-dogs, Dreamsicles,

we came to the counter where bees staggered

into root beer cups and drowned. We gobbled

cotton candy torches, sweet as furtive kisses,

shared on benches beneath summer shadows.

Cherry. Elm. Sycamore. We spread our chenille

blankets across grass, pressed radios to our ears,

mouthing the old words, then loosened

thin bikini straps and rubbed baby oil with iodine

across sunburned shoulders, tossing a glance

through the chain link at an improbable world.

**Neglect**

*R. T. Smith*

**Is the scent of apple boughs smoking  
in the woodstove what I will remember  
of the Red Delicious I brought down, ashamed**

**that I could not convince its limbs to render fruit?  
Too much neglect will do that, skew the sap's  
passage, blacken leaves, dry the bark and heart.**

**I should have lopped the dead limbs early  
and watched each branch with a goshawk's eye,  
patching with medicinal pitch, offering water,**

**compost and mulch, but I was too enchanted  
by pear saplings, flowers and the pasture,  
too callow to believe that death's inevitable**

**for any living being unloved, untended.  
What remains is this armload of applewood  
now feeding the stove's smolder. Splendor**

**ripens a final time in the firebox, a scarlet  
harvest headed, by dawn, to embers.  
Two decades of shade and blossoms - tarts**

**and cider, bees dazzled by the pollen,  
spare elegance in ice - but what goes is gone.  
Smoke is all, through this lesson in winter**

**regret, I've been given to remember.  
Smoke, and Red Delicious apples redder  
than a passing cardinal's crest or cinders.**

**End of April**

*Phillis Levin*

**Under a cherry tree  
I found a robin’s egg,  
broken, but not shattered.**

**I had been thinking of you,  
and was kneeling in the grass  
among fallen blossoms**

**when I saw it: a blue scrap,  
a delicate toy, as light  
as confetti**

**It didn’t seem real,  
but nature will do such things  
from time to time.**

**I looked inside:  
it was glistening, hollow,  
a perfect shell**

**except for the missing crown,  
which made it possible  
to look inside.**

**What had been there  
is gone now  
and lives in my heart**

**where, periodically,  
it opens up its wings,  
tearing me apart.**

**The End and the Beginning**

*Wislawa Szymborska*

**After every war  
someone has to clean up.  
Things won't  
straighten themselves up, after all.**

**Someone has to push the rubble  
to the side of the road,  
so the corpse-filled wagons  
can pass.**

**Someone has to get mired  
in scum and ashes,  
sofa springs,  
splintered glass,  
and bloody rags.**

**Someone has to drag in a girder  
to prop up a wall,  
Someone has to glaze a window,  
rehang a door.**

**Photogenic it's not,  
and takes years.  
All the cameras have left  
for another war.**

**We'll need the bridges back,  
and new railway stations.  
Sleeves will go ragged  
from rolling them up.**

**Someone, broom in hand,  
still recalls the way it was.  
Someone else listens  
and nods with unsevered head.  
But already there are those nearby  
starting to mill about  
who will find it dull.**

**From out of the bushes  
sometimes someone still unearths  
rusted-out arguments  
and carries them to the garbage pile.**

**Those who knew  
what was going on here  
must make way for  
those who know little.  
And less than little.  
And finally as little as nothing.**

**In the grass that has overgrown  
causes and effects,  
someone must be stretched out  
blade of grass in his mouth  
gazing at the clouds.**

**The Summer Day**

*Mary Oliver*

**Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean-  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?**

**To Stammering**

*Kenneth Koch*

**Where did you come from, lamentable quality?  
Before I had a life you were about to ruin my life.  
The mystery of this stays with me.  
“Don’t brood about things,” my elders said.  
I hadn’t any other experience of enemies from inside.  
They were all from outside–big boys  
Who cursed me and hit me; motorists; falling trees.  
All these you were as bad as, yet inside. When I spoke, you were  
there.  
I could avoid you by singing or acting.  
I acted in school plays but was no good at singing.  
Immediately after the play you were there again.  
You ruined the cast party.  
You were not a sign of confidence.  
You were not a sign of manliness.  
You were stronger than good luck and bad; you survived them  
both.  
You were slowly edged out of my throat by psychoanalysis  
You who had been brought in, it seems, like a hired thug  
To beat up both sides and distract them  
From the main issue: oedipal love. You were horrible!  
Tell them, now that you’re back in your thug country,  
That you don’t have to be so rough next time you’re called in  
But can be milder and have the same effect–unhappiness and   
pain.**

**The Other Side**

by Angela Johnson

I used to stand on top of the shed in the back of my

grandmama’s house and see the other side.

The other side of where I was.

The other side had tall buildings and I could buy

hot dogs and pretzels on the street.

At night the hum of the subway and faraway sirens

would put me to sleep.

I dreamed of the other side.

I’d seen it on vacation and TV.

The other side didn’t have a creek or magnolia trees

and warm women who smelled like cookies hugging you

on hot, sticky Sunday afternoons.

If I stood for a long time,

the other side would fade and

where I stood would light my world.