

Let the Light Enter

by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

The Dying Words of Goethe

“Light! more light! the shadows deepen,
And my life is ebbing low,
Throw the windows widely open:
Light! more light! before I go.

“Softly let the balmy sunshine
Play around my dying bed,
E'er the dimly lighted valley
I with lonely feet must tread.

“Light! more light! for Death is weaving
Shadows 'round my waning sight,
And I fain would gaze upon him
Through a stream of earthly light.”

Not for greater gifts of genius;
Not for thoughts more grandly bright,
All the dying poet whispers
Is a prayer for light, more light.

Heeds he not the gathered laurels,
Fading slowly from his sight;
All the poet's aspirations
Center in that prayer for light.

Gracious Savior, when life's day-dreams
Melt and vanish from the sight,
May our dim and longing vision
Then be blessed with light, more light.

This Is Just To Say
by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Now I Become Myself

by May Sarton

Now I become myself. It's taken
Time, many years and places;
I have been dissolved and shaken,
Worn other people's faces,
Run madly, as if Time were there,
Terribly old, crying a warning,
"Hurry, you will be dead before—"
(What? Before you reach the morning?
Or the end of the poem is clear?
Or love safe in the walled city?)
Now to stand still, to be here,
Feel my own weight and density!
The black shadow on the paper
Is my hand; the shadow of a word
As thought shapes the shaper
Falls heavy on the page, is heard.
All fuses now, falls into place
From wish to action, word to silence,
My work, my love, my time, my face
Gathered into one intense
Gesture of growing like a plant.
As slowly as the ripening fruit
Fertile, detached, and always spent,
Falls but does not exhaust the root,
So all the poem is, can give,
Grows in me to become the song,
Made so and rooted by love.
Now there is time and Time is young.
O, in this single hour I live
All of myself and do not move.
I, the pursued, who madly ran,
Stand still, stand still, and stop the sun!

“Illegal” Immigrants & Legal Inhumanity

by Everett Hoagland

after columbus came
in the name of God & the reign
of spain & his wrecking crew invaded
raided attacked took land & gold grabbed
hold & raped diseased undid taino carib arawak
as they pleased

after cortez & his mounted cortege
massacred aztecs & mayans & others
of los indios & recast the conquered cultures
into ingots gold altars & coins

after the pious anglo pilgrims
became populous & perpetrated
genocide against the connecticut
pequot

after the founding fathers
of “illicit” biracial slave children
born of legal free-market-slavery’s
monticellos’ slave concubines white-
washed it all with a cult of “race” designed
to keep uniquely american people colored
by inhumanity in their “place” outside

their in-
alienable americanism by way of what was
an entitling duplicitous white-lie titled
the constitution

after all that who are we
the people but a nation of emigrated
immigrants? who
are we the people to oppressively oversee
the exclusion of spanish-speaking french-
speaking portuguese-speaking english-
speaking dutch-speaking people
of color

whose central american antillean or african
ancestors were already in or brought to & legally out-
right sold & bought in diverse places in the americas long

before europe's "huddled masses" who are we
the people to keep them from the pursuit
of happiness?

who are we the people
to keep people
from cropping the amber waves of grain
from cropping the leaves of grass
in the promised land of our grand speeches
& all-american poetry
from working as rightful migrants in the vineyards
where the grapes of wrath are stored
from harvesting the fields from which we get
our daily bread????????????????????
Lord!

Ella Mason and Her Eleven Cats

by Sylvia Plath

Old Ella Mason keeps cats, eleven at last count,
In her ramshackle house off Somerset Terrace;
People make queries
One seeing our neighbor's cat-haunt,
Saying: "Something's addled in a woman who accommodates
That many cats."

Rum and red-faced as a watermelon, her voice
Long gone to wheeze and see, Ella Mason
For no good reason
Plays hostess to tabby, tom, and increase,
With cream and chicken-gut feasting the palates
Of finical cats.

Village stories goes that in olden days
Ella flounced about minx-thin and haughty,
A fashionable beauty
Slaying the dandies with her emerald eyes;
Now, run to fat, she's a spinster whose door shuts
On all but cats.

Once we children sneaked over to spy Miss Masson
Napping in her kitchen paved with saucers,
On antimacassars,
Table-top, cupboard shelf, cats lounged brazen,
One gruff-timbred purr rolling from furred throats:
Such stentorian cats!

With poke and giggle, ready to skedaddle,
We peered agog through the cobwebbed door
Straight into the yellow glare
Of guardian cats crouched round their idol,
While Ella drowsed whiskered with sleek face, sly wits:
Sphinx-queen of cats.

"Look! there she goes, Cat-Lady Mason!"
We snickered as she shambled down Somerset Terrace
To market for her dearies,
More mammoth and blowzy with every season;
"Miss Ella's got loony from keeping in cahoots
With eleven cats."

But now turned kinder with time, we mark Miss Mason
Blinking green-eyed and solitary
At girls who marry—
Demure ones, lithe ones, needing no lesson
That vain jades sulk single down bridal nights
Accurst as wild-cats.

Each in His Own Tongue
by William Herbert Carruth

A fire-mist and a planet,—
A crystal and a cell,—
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high,—
And all over the upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod,—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in,—
Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,—
A mother starved for her brood,—
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathways plod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God.