

Death Snips Proud Men
by Carl Sandburg

DEATH is stronger than all the governments because the governments are men and men die and then death laughs: Now you see 'em, now you don't.

Death is stronger than all proud men and so death snips proud men on the nose, throws a pair of dice and says: Read 'em and weep.

Death sends a radiogram every day: When I want you I'll drop in—and then one day he comes with a master-key and lets himself in and says: We'll go now.

Death is a nurse mother with big arms: 'Twon't hurt you at all; it's your time now; you just need a long sleep, child; what have you had anyhow better than sleep?

Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter



John Crowe Ransom

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder her brown study
Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise
From their noon apple-dream and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready,
In one house we are stern stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

The Missing

Thomas Gunn

Now as I watch the progress of the plague,
The friends surrounding me fall sick, grow thin,
and drop away. Bared, is my shape less vague
—Sharply exposed and with a sculpted skin?
I do not like the statue's chill contour,
Not nowadays. The warmth investing me
Led outward through mind, limb, feeling, and more
In an involved increasing family.
Contact of friend led to another friend
Supple entwinement through the living mass
Which for all that I knew might have no end,
Image of an unlimited embrace.
I do not just feel ease, though comfortable:
Aggressive as in some ideal of sport,
With ceaseless movement thrilling through the
whole,
their push kept me as firm as their support.
But death—Their deaths have left me less defined:
It was their pulsing presence made me clear.
I borrowed from it, I was unconfined,
Who tonight balance unsupported here,

Eyes glaring from raw marble, in a pose
Languorously part-buried in the block,
Shins perfect and no calves, as if I froze
Between potential and a finished work.
—Abandoned incomplete, shape of a shape,
In which exact detail shows the more strange,
Trapped in unwholeness, I find no escape
Back to the play of constant give and change.

**All but Death, can be Adjusted --
by Emily Dickinson**

All but Death, can be Adjusted --
Dynasties repaired --
Systems -- settled in their Sockets --
Citadels -- dissolved --

Wastes of Lives -- resown with Colors
By Succeeding Springs --
Death -- unto itself -- Exception --
Is exempt from Change --

When I heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Walt Whitman

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them;
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;
Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars

5

Poverty

mahboob rabbani

Poverty is thing bad
Poverty is reason of sad
it's symbol's unlucky mom
it's symbol's unlucky dad

Poverty create a terror
It create an error
It is resistance of study
it create problem's ever

Education is the light of good life
Education is the symbol of beautiful wife
Education finish darkness and poverty
Education is mightier than knife

Frustration V 1.0

Connor Wade

Nothing is equivalent
To my monotonous frustration
I can't comprehend what you're saying
For what is the purpose of education?
Am I distracted
Or simply confused
What's the point in applying
Words I know I've used?
Why is this here
Why does it exist
Those who know can't tell
But I know they can't resist.
I have little say here, so
To authorities I wrote
'It makes little sense that
The world works by majority vote. =('
Anyway, could this lack of comprehension
Be caused by what's already on our hands
Some people are concerned about life
While others occupy themselves with video games and rock bands.
So overall I venture a reason
To my frustration
Still, I can't comprehend what you're saying
For what is the purpose for education?

It is my life

Eva Pearl Frost

It's my life,
It's not yours to live,
It's my choice,
It's not yours to pick.

It's my instinct,
It's not yours to feel,
It's my goal,
it's not yours to achieve.

It's my education,
It's not yours to learn,
It's my dreams,
It's not yours to chase.

Have an opinion,
But, I won't agree to it.
Have a say,
But I won't do it.

Just be there,
Or go away,
Just support me,
Or don't give a damn.

It's my life,
It's not yours to control,
It's my choice,
It's not yours to judge.

It's my instinct,
It's not yours to listen,
It's my goal,
It's not yours to succeed.

It's my education,
It's not yours to complete,
It's my dreams,
It's not yours to manage.

Have a go,
But, I won't surrender,
Have a thought,
But, I won't ask for it.

Just be there,
Or don't be,
Just support me,
Or don't at all,
I wouldn't care.

Hard Times (from Michigan)

Diana Poems

In these hard times
Of unreported unemployed voices
Of ignored college graduates
Of desperate youth
As well as desperate old
In these times
Education is overlooked
Pale profit wins over ethics
Our youth gets pushed further
Further away from their hard earned achievements
Further away from their intricate dreams
In these times
Fresh bread is left behind to turn into mold
Experience overtakes knowledge
Education becomes a burden
The educated are the punished
When they should be awarded
Education is no longer counted as experience
Our interactions with one another
Is no longer experience
They become experience (in the eyes of employers) by the documentation of a paycheck
To be qualified
We must be paid to interact with each other
We must be paid to use our knowledge
We must be paid to develop our skills
When in reality
We pay for our education ourselves
And in our education in which we pay
We interact and learn from others without demanding to be paid
In the eyes of the employer
Education is not experience
Eight years of college and achieving a P.H.D.
Is no longer experience
What employers don't realize is...
Education is a full-time job
A full time job that we do not get paid for
Education doesn't employ us
We employ education for ourselves
Yet...education is still not experience
When will they open their eyes and enlighten their minds?
Education should never have to come last
But should always come first
No wonder we are behind

Physicality Poems

A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body

by Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell

SOUL

O who shall, from this dungeon, raise
A soul enslav'd so many ways?
With bolts of bones, that fetter'd stands
In feet, and manacled in hands;
Here blinded with an eye, and there
Deaf with the drumming of an ear;
A soul hung up, as 'twere, in chains
Of nerves, and arteries, and veins;
Tortur'd, besides each other part,
In a vain head, and double heart.

BODY

O who shall me deliver whole
From bonds of this tyrannic soul?
Which, stretch'd upright, impales me so
That mine own precipice I go;
And warms and moves this needless frame,
(A fever could but do the same)
And, wanting where its spite to try,
Has made me live to let me die.
A body that could never rest,
Since this ill spirit it possest.

SOUL

What magic could me thus confine
Within another's grief to pine?
Where whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain;
And all my care itself employs;
That to preserve which me destroys;
Constrain'd not only to endure
Diseases, but, what's worse, the cure;
And ready oft the port to gain,
Am shipwreck'd into health again.

BODY

But physic yet could never reach
The maladies thou me dost teach;

Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,
And then the palsy shakes of fear;
The pestilence of love does heat,
Or hatred's hidden ulcer eat;
Joy's cheerful madness does perplex,
Or sorrow's other madness vex;
Which knowledge forces me to know,
And memory will not forego.
What but a soul could have the wit
To build me up for sin so fit?
So architects do square and hew
Green trees that in the forest grew.

An Exchange between the Fingers and the Toes

by John Fuller

John Fuller

Fingers:

Cramped, you are hardly anything but fidgets.
We, active, differentiate the digits:
Whilst you are merely *little toe* and *big*
(Or, in the nursery, some futile pig)
Through vital use as pincers there has come
Distinction of the *finger* and the *thumb*;
Lacking a knuckle you have sadly missed
Our meaningful translation to a *fist*;
And only by the curling of that joint
Could the firm *index* come to have a point.
You cannot punch or demonstrate or hold
And therefore cannot write or pluck or mould:
Indeed, it seems deficiency in art
Alone would prove you the inferior part.

Toes:

Not so, my friends. Our clumsy innocence
And your deft sin is the main difference
Between the body's near extremities.
Please do not think that we intend to please:
Shut in the dark, we once were free like you.
Though you enslaved us, are you not slaves, too?
Our early balance caused your later guilt,
Erect, of finding out how we were built.
Your murders and discoveries compile
A history of the crime of being agile,
And we it is who save you when you fight
Against the odds: you cannot take to flight.
Despite your fabrications and your cunning,
The deepest instinct is expressed in running.

Cutting Hair

by Minnie Bruce Pratt

Minnie Bruce Pratt

She pays attention to the hair, not her fingers, and cuts herself once or twice a day. Doesn't notice anymore, just if the blood starts flowing. Says, Excuse me, to the customer and walks away for a band-aid. Same spot on the middle finger over and over, raised like a callus. Also the nicks where she snips between her fingers, the torn webbing. Also spider veins on her legs now, so ugly, though she sits in a chair for half of each cut, rolls around from side to side. At night in the winter she sleeps in white cotton gloves, Neosporin on the cuts, vitamin E, then heavy lotion. All night, for weeks, her white hands lie clothed like those of a young girl going to her first party. Sleeping alone, she opens and closes her long scissors and the hair falls under her hands. It's a good living, kind of like an undertaker, the people keep coming, and the hair, shoulder length, French twist, braids. Someone has to cut it. At the end she whisks and talcums my neck. Only then can I bend and see my hair, how it covers the floor, curls and clippings of brown and silver, how it shines like a field of scythed hay beneath my feet.

Deer Skull

by Susan Griffin

Susan Griffin

1

I keep placing my hands over
my face, the fingertips just
resting on the place where I feel
my eyebrows and the fine end
of a bone. My eyes are covered
with the blood of my hands, my
palms hold
my jaws. I do this at dinner.
My daughter asks
Are you all right?
and by a common miracle
when I smile
she knows I am.

2

I ask her what she will do
after we eat. Sleep she
tells me. But I will clean
the deer skull, wash it.

3

You gave me this skull in the woods
told me to bring it clean
and tell the story I had told you
before, about how the deer had
come to me, and I said I would.

4

And I put this skull on an old
newspaper, pulled the lower part
of the jaws free, touched it first
carefully, as if it would fall apart
in my hands, the bone paper-
thin, and then I saw I could
scrub, so brushed the surface with
steel and my fingers and more
and more this surface became
familiar to me.

5

I wanted to see the lines of it
what it would be if it had been
polished by the wind, the water,
and my hands, these agents making
the skull more itself.

Slowly I was not afraid at all
and my fingers went into the deepest
holes of this thing, not afraid
for myself or it, feeling
suddenly as if cleaning this
small fragment of earth away
from the crevices inside was
like loving.

6

But it was when I touched the place
where the eyes were that I knew
this was the shell of the deer that had
lived here, this was this deer
and not this deer, her home and
now empty of her, but not
empty of her, I knew also, not
empty of her, as my hands
trembled.

7

And in that instant remembered you
had been in that body of
that deer dying, what
does it feel like to be a deer
dying, the death consumes
you like birth, you are
nowhere else but in the center.

8

Remembering those gentle deer
that watched me as I wept,
or the deer that leapt as if
out of my mind, when I saw
speaking there in that green place
the authority of the heart
and the deer of the woods where
my feet stood, stared at me until
I whispered to her and cried
at her presence.

9

And when I cleaned the skull
I washed myself and sat
my body half out of the water
and put my hands again over
my face, my fingers edging the
bone over my eyes, and I thought
how good this feels and this
is a gesture you make.

10

Tell this story of the deer's skull
you asked quietly and so I
came in my own time to put
these words carefully here
slowly listing each motion
on this thin paper
as fragile and as tough
as knowledge.

Fake Tattoo

by Nikki Grimes

Nikki Grimes
My butterfly sits
atop my wrist
as if it's poised for flight.

My lovely tattoo
no longer new
will fade before the night.

Still, after it's gone,
it will live on
inside my memory.

This jewel of the air—
beauty most rare—
that once was plain as me.

For the Tattooed Man

by Sharmila Voorakkara

Because she broke your heart, *Shannon's* a badge—
a seven-letter skidmark that scars up
across your chest, a flare of indelible script.
Between *Death or Glory*, and *Mama*, she rages,
scales the trellis of your rib cage;
her red hair swings down to bracket your ankles, whip
up the braid of your backbone, cuff your wrists. She keeps
you sleepless with her afterimage,

and each pinned and martyred limb aches for more.
Her memory wraps you like a vise.
How simple the pain that trails and graces
the length of your body. How it fans, blazes,
writes itself over in the blood's tightening sighs,
bruises into wisdom you have no name for.

