

**Francesco Petrarch** (July 1304 - July 1374)

from *Rime Sparse*

*original Italian*

**i**

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono  
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core  
in sul mio primo giovenile errore  
quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'ï sono,

**A**

**B**

**B**

**A**

del vario stile in ch'io piango et ragiono  
fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,  
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,  
spero trovar pietà, nonché perdono.

**A**

**B**

**B**

**A**

Ma ben veggio or sí come al popol tutto  
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente  
di me mesdesmo meco mi vergogno;

**C**

**D**

**E**

et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,  
e 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente  
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

**C**

**D**

**E**

*English translation*

**i**

You who hear the sound, in scattered rhymes,  
of those sighs on which I fed my heart,  
in my first vagrant youthfulness,  
when I was partly other than I am,

I hope to find pity, and forgiveness,  
for all the modes in which I talk and weep,  
between vain hope and vain sadness,  
in those who understand love through its trials.

Yet I see clearly now I have become  
an old tale amongst all these people, so that  
it often makes me ashamed of myself;

and shame is the fruit of my vanities,  
and remorse, and the clearest knowledge  
of how the world's delight is a brief dream.

taken from:  
<http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html>

trans: A.S. Kline

**Henry Howard** (1517 – 19 January 1547)

*Complaint of the Lover Disdained*

In Cyprus springs, whereas Dame Venus dwelt, **A 5**  
A well so hot, that whoso tastes the same, **B 5**  
Were he of stone, as thawed ice should melt, **A 4.5**  
And kindled find his breast with fixed flame; **B 4.5**  
Whose moist poison dissolved hath my hate. **C 4.5**  
This creeping fire my cold limbs so opprest, **D 5**  
That in the heart that harbour'd freedom, late: **C 5**  
Endless despair long thraldom hath imprest. **D 5**  
Another so cold in frozen ice is found, **E 5.5**  
Whose chilling venom of repugnant kind, **F 5**  
The fervent heat doth quench of Cupid's wound, **E 5**  
And with the spot of change infects the mind; **F 5**  
    Whereof my dear hath tasted to my pain: **G 5**  
    My service thus is grown into disdain. **G 5**

*Description of Spring, Wherein Every Thing Renews,*

*Save Only the Lover* || an experimental form

The soote season, that bud and blome forth bringes, **A 5**  
With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale: **B 5**  
The nightingale with fethers new she singes: **A 5**  
The turtle to her make hath tolde her tale: **B 5**  
Somer is come, for every spray nowe springes: **A 5**  
The hart hath hung his olde head on the pale: **B 5**  
The buck in brake his winter cote he flings: **A 5**  
The fishes flote with newe repaired scale: **B 5**  
The adder all her sloughe away she slinges: **A 5**  
The swift swallow pursueth the flyes smale: **B 5**  
The busy bee her honye now she minges: **A 5**  
Winter is worne that was the flowers bale: **B 5**  
And thus I see among these pleasant things **A 5**  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs. **A 5**

1. *soote*: sweet

4. *turtle*: turtledove; make: mate

6. *his olde head*: i.e. his antlers; *pale*: fence post

7. *brake*: bushes

9. *sloughe*: skin

11. *minges*: mingles; mixes

12. *bale*: evil; harm; misfortune; woe; misery; sorrow

**Emund Spenser** (1552 – 1599)

from *Amoretti*

**IX**

Long while I sought to what I might compare **A**  
Those powerful eyes, which lighten my dark sight, **B**  
Yet find I nought on earth to which I dare **A**  
Resemble th' image of their goodly light. **B**  
Not to the sun, for they do shine by night; **B**  
Nor to the moon, for they are changed never; **C**  
Nor to the stars, for they have purer sight; **B**  
Nor to the fire, for they consume not ever; **C**  
Nor to the lightning, for they still persever; **C**  
Nor to the diamond, for they are more tender; **D**  
Nor unto crystal, far nought may them sever; **C**  
Nor unto glass, such baseness might offend her; **D**  
Then to the Maker self they likest be, **E**  
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see. **E**

**William Shakespeare** (1564 – 1616)

from *The Sonnets*

**126**

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power **A**  
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his fickle hour; **A**  
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st **B**  
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st. **B**  
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack, **C**  
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back, **C**  
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill **D**  
May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill. **D**  
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure! **E**  
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure: **E**  
Her audit (though delayed) answered must be, **F**  
And her quietus is to render thee. **F**

Spenser, Edmund. *English Sixteenth-Century Verse: An Anthology*.  
Richard S. Sylvester, ed. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *The Sonnets and Narrative Poems:  
The Complete Non-Dramatic Poetry*. Sylvan Barnet, ed.  
NY: Signet Classic, Penquin Books, 1989. Print.

**Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz** (Nov. 12, 1648/51 – April 17, 1695)

149

Were the perils of the ocean fully weighed,  
no man would voyage, or, could he but read  
the hidden dangers, knowingly proceed  
or dare to bait the bull to frenzied rage.

Were prudent rider overly dismayed,  
should he contemplate the fury of his steed  
or ponder where its headlong course might lead,  
there'd be no reining hand to be obeyed.

But were there one so daring, one so bold  
that, heedless of the danger, he might place,  
upon Apollo's reins emboldened hand

To guide the fleeting chariot bathed in gold,  
the diversity of life he would embrace  
and never chose a state to last his span.

de la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. Margaret Sayers Peden, trans. NY: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1985. Print.

**Lady Mary Wroth** (1587 – 1651/3)

from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

I

When night's blacke Mantle could most darknes prove,  
And sleepe deaths Image did my senses hier,  
From knowledg of my self, then thoughts did move  
Swifter then those, most switnes need require:

In sleepe, a Chariot drawne by wind'd desire,  
I sawe: wher sate bright Venus Queene of Love,  
And att her feete her sonne, still adding fire  
To burning hearts which she did hold above,

But one hart flaming more then all the rest,  
The goddesse held, and put itt to my brest,  
Dear sonne now shutt (shoot), sayd she: thus must we winne;

Hee her obay'd, and martir'd my poore hart.  
I, waking hop'd as dreames itt would depart,  
Yett since: O mee, a lover have I binn.

Wroth, Lady Mary. *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*. Josephine A. Roberts, ed. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1983. Print.

**John Berryman** (October 25, 1914 – January 7, 1972)

from *Berryman's Sonnets*

**115**

All we were going strong last night this time,  
the *mots* were flying & the frozen daiquiris  
were downing, supine on the floor lay Lise  
listening to Schubert grievous & sublime,  
my head was frantic with a following rime:  
it was a good evening, an evening to please,  
I kissed her in the kitchen—ecstasies—  
among so much good we tamped down the crime.

The weather's changing. This morning was cold,  
as I made for the grove, without expectation,  
some hundred Sonnets in my pocket, old,  
to read her if she came. Presently the sun  
yellowed the pines & my lady came not  
in blue jeans & a sweater. I sat down & wrote.

Berryman, John. *Berryman's Sonnets*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968. Print.

**Billy Collins** (March 22, 1941 –)

**Sonnet**

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 while 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.

Collins, Billy. *Literature and the Writing Process, 8th Edition*. Elizabeth McMahan, et.al., eds. NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. 2007. Print.

