

Poetry Writing
Sonnet Sampler

Design
Robert Frost, 1874-1963

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth--
Assorted characters of death and blight
Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
Like the ingredients of a witches' broth--
A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,
The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
What brought the kindred spider to that height,
Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
What but design of darkness to appal?--
If design govern in a thing so small.

As Kingfishers Catch Fire
BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung
bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

I say *móre*: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: *thát* keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
Christ — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Leda and the Swan
W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

One Morning, Shoeing Horses
Henry Taylor

I hold the shank while the blacksmith nails a shoe
in place, and think about how many years
I've worked at this—watching the horse's ears
for signs of what he might decide to do,
touching his neck, turning his head to coax
a little weight away from the lifted hoof,
a flywhisk light and always on the move,
the soothing whispers turned to hammer strokes.

But I've been unsteady at it since a day
like this, some ten years back, when a driven nail
got under the blacksmith's wedding ring, unclinked.
There was a roaring scream, the horse flinched
and snatched his hoof, and there the finger lay
twitching a little, beside the water pail.

Sonnet: The Poet at Seven
Donald Justice, *Selected Poems*, 1979

And on the porch, across the upturned chair,
The boy would spread a dingy counterpane
Against the length and majesty of the rain;
And on all fours crawl under it like a bear
To lick his wounds in secret, in his lair;
And afterwards, in the windy yard again,
One hand cocked back, release his paper plane
Frail as a May fly to the faithless air.
And summer evenings he would whirl around
Faster and faster till the drunken ground
Rose up to meet him; sometimes he would squat
Among the bent weeds of the vacant lot,
Waiting for dusk and someone dear to come
And whip him down the street, but gently home.